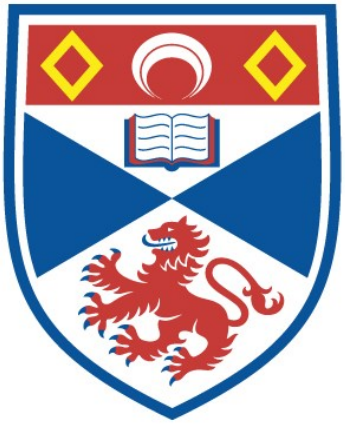
A THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF BOOKS PRINTED ABROAD IN ENGLISH IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY (1525-1548)

Fiona J. Richardson

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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A THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF BOOKS PRINTED ABROAD IN ENGLISH IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY [1525 - 1548]

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of St. Andrews

ABSTRACT

A THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF BOOKS PRINTED ABROAD IN ENGLISH IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY [1525 - 1548]

The English reformation, unlike that in Germany and Switzerland, evolved over a fairly long span of time. At first Luther's works were sold unchecked by English booksellers, being first prohibited in 1520. Over the next few years the advance of reforming ideas was considered so serious as to merit the further attention of the English Crown. By 1524 it was found necessary to enforce a law prohibiting the importation of theological texts into England, and efforts were made to suppress the further spread of the Protestant heresy throughout the realm. However, despite the Act of Parliament and a wave of persecutions the church was unable to stop the influx of prohibited books, which came off the printing presses of Germany and the Low Countries.

With the aid of the revised version of the S.T.C. and additional catalogues of early printed writings, it has been possible to compile a list of foreign publications, all of which were intended for the English reader. These texts printed in the vernacular

were written and commissioned by English writers forced into exile for their own safety, but also determined to establish Protestant ideas in their own country. It is difficult to determine the exact numbers of Protestant books entering the country, but some indication of their appeal can be found from the lists of prohibited books issued by the Ecclesiastical authorities.

A detailed examination of these publications yields a clear picture of the theological teaching of Englands earliest Protestants. By carefully comparing these ideas with those of earlier heretics and contemporary reformers, it has been possible to assess the extent to which outside ideas has influenced the minds of these men. Further analysis has revealed the original and subtle genius of men who combined the ideas of the Continental reformers with those native to the English tradition, in order to produce a reformed theology which appealed to the unique situation in their own country.

(a) I certify that FIONA J. RICHARDSON has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution of the University Court 1967, No 1 (as amended), and is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

(b) I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance 350 [General No. 12] on 1st October, 1981 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D under Resolution of the University Court, 1967, NO. 1 (as amended) on 12th February, 1986.

The Following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by myself, is my own composition, and has not previously been presented for a higher degree. The research was carried out in the University of St. Andrews under the supervision of Professor Cameron

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INTRODUCTION

The English reformation cannot be given an exact date, since unlike that of Germany and Switzerland, it evolved over a fairly lengthy period of time. Its origins can neither be traced back to Henry's break with Rome in 1531, nor to the influence of a sole reformer. Rather it was the result of a prolonged struggle by a number of reformers, first against the Roman Catholic Church and then later against Henry himself. These two factors combined resulted in the publication of a wealth of early English reforming material, which gives a unique insight into the development of the English reformation.

The Protestant movement started by Luther quickly gained momentum through the support of both Prince and people. In contrast the English reformation was far slower to take hold, enjoying little popularity with either prince or people. It was only when England's earliest Protestants were forced into exile that they began to utilize existing links between the Low Countries and their home.

These early reformers, lived within very real danger of apprehension and death. Whilst on the Continent they moved amongst the most prominent figures of the Swiss and German reformation, absorbing their ideas which

they later attempted to translate into a form suitable for their own country.

Throughout the period spanning from 1525 to the end of Henry's reign these reformers sought firstly, to persuade Henry of the need to instigate reform and secondly, to teach all English people the message of the New Testament. Working in extremely difficult conditions, they wrote their tracts, organised their printing, and sometimes also their sale through booksellers in England. Their task was made doubly hard by their constant need to escape detection, a need which caused some to move between the different centres of Europe.

The printing press, though not yet a century old was to play a critical part in the dissemination and popularisation of reforming ideas amongst the English population.

Gutenberg's press of 1450, had been the first commercially viable press to use metal printing plates and an ink specially designed to use with metal. So successful was his invention that the process of printing remained largely unchanged for over three centuries.

The effect of the press upon European development was of great importance, particularly through its contribution in the dissemination of reforming ideas. The printing press made it possible for the reformers to distribute copies of their works in large numbers. This in turn resulted in an increased readership. One particular advantage of this early press was that it could easily be moved from place to place. Thus enabling the printers of Protestant works to escape detection. Occasionally as with the first edition of William Tyndale's New Testament, it became necessary to use more than one press, because the first had been detected by the authorities.

All of the early reformers utilised the press fully. The names of some such as Tyndale, Bale and Frith are well known, for the large number of books which they composed and commissioned for printing. Others amongst them are less well known, men like Thomas Solme, Richard Tracy and William Roy, who produced only one or two works, but who also made an important contribution to the English reformation.

At first the reformers expected Henry to support the calls for reform, and many of the earlier works were addressed to him in a conciliatory tone. Even when it bacame clear that Henry had never really intended to carry out a radical reform programme, the reformers

remained loyal to him, placing the blame for their disappointment upon the shoulders of Stephen Gardiner.

For Henry the 1531-1534 Acts of Supremacy were not a matter of religious concern, but rather of political necessity. They were in fact little more than the means by which he hoped to secure the succession to the throne. On the surface at least it appears that the newly born English church grew out of the need to secure an heir to the throne. There is very little evidence to suggest that it was otherwise.

However, on the other hand Henry cannot have failed to be influenced by at least a handful of the reforming tracts, handed to him by Anne Boleyn. It is clear enough that Henry was aware of the works of at least some of the reformers, as he offered his protection to Fish, and for a time had an interest in securing Tyndale's return to England. Additionally, other reformers enjoyed the patronage of Thomas Cromwell, during his time as chancellor at Henry's court.

Henry was partially receptive to a least some of the reformers ideas, for in 1531 he took the first steps along the road to reform. For the reformers Henry's dennunciation of the authority of the Pope opened the way for the cleansing and restoration of the church. However, the reformers were to be disappointed in their

expectations of Henry's desire to throughly reform the church. Whilst the reformers sought to persuade Henry to carry out the much needed reform, Henry further limited the importation of their works and charged his Bishops to punish those involved in their composition and distribution. Thus whilst Henry turned to persecution as a means of protecting the orthodoxy of his realm, the early Protestants turned to the printing press as the perfect medium by which to spread reform.

It is somewhat difficult to account for the eventual long term popularity of the reformation, when there is evidence to show that the movement enjoyed only limited support amongst the common people. In fact the reformation seems to have encountered more opposition than support in this area, as evidenced by the Pilgrimage of Grace.

The people of England were certainly far from irreligious, and they were highly critical of ecclesiastical abuses within the church. Perhaps, the explanation for the poor response evoked by the reforming ideas, lies in the fact that the life of sixteenth century man was basically dominated by the traditions of medieval religious thought.

In view of this initial hostility it seems strange there was very little significant protest against the

more radical reforms of Edward's reign. Additionally, it is hard to account for the fact that despite the restoration of the Catholic faith under Mary Tudor, Protestantism had taken such a secure hold that it was easily re-established under Elizabeth I.

Of course the reformers were not solely trying to impose external ideas upon an unwilling population. The tradition of reform, which was well established in Lollard circles was far from ignored, and the strong influence of Lollard anti-clericalism is clearly visible in the works of reformers such as Fish, Roy and Brinkelow.

Stimulated by the ideas of Luther, Zwingli and the remnants of Lollard beliefs at home, England's earliest reformers worked out their doctrines of grace and justification. Diversification became an inherent characteristic of the English reformation, since Henry failed to provide the new English Church with a coherent confession of belief. Matters were not helped by the Act of Six articles, which simply restated key Catholic beliefs, and provided a backdrop against which the exiled Protestants would present their various views of the Eucharist.

In comparison with the European reformation the English reform movement lacked coherence. However, one point

on which they were all agreed was the centrality of Christ to the salvation of mankind. This gave them a sense of unity and purpose, which enabled them to contribute to the English reformation.

Protestant reforms did not simply emerge out of popular spiritual discontent, rather it took the form of well defined doctrines and ideologies. However, the reformers' debt to already established European and English traditions raises the question of originality, and the extent to which they made a useful and valid contribution towards the English reformation.

The Protestant doctrines had potentially dangerous social consequences. However, such social concerns never surfaced in England. Was this simply due to the nature of English society, or did the reformers actively prevent social discontent?

One final question arises, namely how far the gradual religious changes in the reign of Henry VIII really reflect the ideas of England's earliest reformers, and to what extent did they achieve their main objectives?

As a contribution to answering these questions the following chapters examine the lives and work of England's earliest Protestants during the early reforming period.

This is a useful exercise for a variety of reasons. Firstly, if any attempt is to be made in answering these questions it is necessary to analyse the theological content of the reformers work. It is only by such a detailed examination of their works that one may discern their beliefs and trace the origins of their thought.

Further analysis of the works in the light of the contemporary situation will yield a clearer picture of the background behind the reform movement. It will additionally give further pointers to the relationship between early Protestantism and Lollard survival, and the contribution of the latter to both the format and dissemination of the reformer's ideas.

There is one further area worthy of note, namely, the overwhelming concern of the exiled Protestants to gain the support of all sections of society, from the King down to the ordinary people, and the means by which they sought to realise this aim.

The reformation of early sixteenth century England was not simply a matter of exchanging one set of beliefs and practices for another, but rather of adapting existing Protestant beliefs to meet the demands of the contemporary situation. At the same time the reformers also needed to find a way to utilise the potential of

contemporary discontent and anti-ecclesiastical feeling, as well as the remnants of Lollard survival.

Not all of the English vernacular works printed abroad during this period were either the product of English authors or favourable to the Protestant cause. A small number of these European books are the works of Roman Catholic authors, for example Thomas Abell's 'In Victa Veritas'[1] which attacked the divorce of Henry VIII. A number of books are also devotional works encouraging the laity to follow a programme of meditation and prayer[2]. Scottish reformers too were forced to flee to the safety of the Continent and from here Patrick Hamilton, Thomas Gau and John Johnson issued their own unique contributions to both the reformation at home and abroad.

1 Thomas Abell. - In victa Veritas - An answere that by no manner of lawe it maybe lawfullfor Kynge Henry the Ayght to be divoesid - Lunenberg [really Antwerp, M.de Keyser] 1532.

2 a) Emprowere - 'Mystic Sweet Rosary of the Faithful soul' M de Keyser, Antwerp 1533.

b) Here beginneth the Rosary of our lady in englysshe with many good petycions dyrect to her W Vorsterman, Antwerp, 1510? 1525?

This work examines the life and writings of England's exiled Protestant reformers, with particular reference to the minor authors. It looks at both their theological ideas and political motives as well as the influence of external sources upon the development of their ideas. This is done in order to gain an insight into their understanding of the Christian religion in a time of initially limited but important change.

SECTION A

EARLY PROTESTANT AUTHORS AND THEIR PUBLISHERS

(I) PUBLISHERS OF ENGLISH BOOKS ABROAD 1525 - 1548

In the late 1520's the English authorities began to make a concerted effort to stop the growth of the new heresies with the result that many of the early reformers fled to the Continent. William Tyndale who had been forced into exile after the publication of the vernacular New Testament, was joined by George Joye in 1527 and Robert Barnes in 1528. Antwerp became the new refuge of these reformers and consequently the main centre for the printing and distribution of English reformation tracts. Forbidden to preach in their own country, these early reformers chose to exploit the potential of the printing press as an alternative means, by which to make their voice heard.

Links between England and the printers of the Low Countries, were already well established by the sixteenth century, as Dutch printers supplied the gaps left in the English market by the inadequacy of the

1 M.E. Kronenberg - Notes on English printing in the Low Countries 1491-1540 Library 4th ser 9 1029 p 140 - gives the Figures for the number of books issued up until 1500 as 1,900-2,000 in the Low Countries, compared with 360 in England

home printing trade. M.E. Kronenberg[1] states that on comparison of the two countries, she found that printers in the Low Countries issued over four times as many books as their English counterparts, in the years preceding 1500. Thus she concluded in the case of the latter that "apparently this was not enough for the wants of the country, so foreign printers found a wide field for exportation to England".

A large proportion of the book trade was given over to the provision of liturgical texts, which is evident from the large section allocated to such works in the Short Title Catalogue[1]. Not all of the works printed abroad were of a theological nature, nor on the prohibited list. In addition to the liturgies many others were school books or almanacs, and much of the trade was dependent on convenience and economic concerns, not idealism.

Links between the printers of the Low Countries and the English market were further enhanced, by the presence of Dutch stationers in England, who acted as agents for their fellow printers. Kronenberg refers to two such stationers, Peter Kaetz and Fraciscus Byrekman[2].

1. Pollard and Redgrave - Short Title Catalogue
2. M.E. Kronenberg 'op cit' p. 144

The former was probably only resident in England for approximately two years, and is known to have acted as the agent in the sale of Ruremund's liturgical works. The latter represented a family trade which persisted for many years, linking Cologne, Antwerp and Paris, with the book trade in London

It was only after 1525 that the nature of this book trade began to show a significant change, embracing the works of the continental reformers, alongside those of Tyndale, Frith, Fish, and Coverdale. This change in emphasis was greatly aided by the increasing influx of English exiles to the Low Countries, where they sought to gain publication of their works before smuggling them back to their own country.

Antwerp quickly became the centre for the printing of prohibited English works. The names of Meirdman, Hoochstraten, Martin de Keyser, Mattheus Crom, and Christoffel van Ruremund numbering amongst those most directly involved. Robert Steele[1] points to the possible existence of two centres of proselytism in Antwerp at this time. He sees these as centring around the presses of Endhoven (Ruremund), and Fuchs, and

1 K. Steele - Notes on English books printed abroad 1525- 1548 Trans Bibl Soc. 11, 1911, p 190

financially supported by merchants sympathetic to the Protestant cause.

So prolific was the output of these continental presses, that by 1531 Henry found it necessary to issue a proclamation, forbidding the preaching of heretical ideas and the possession of heretical books. Furthermore the proclamation stated "that no manner of person or persons, of what estate, degree or condition he or they be, do from henceforth presume to bring into the realm, or do sell, receive, take, or detain, any books or work, printed or written, which is made, or hereafter shall be made against the faith catholic, or against the holy decrees, laws, or ordinances of holy church"[1]

Foxe continues to list sixteen books which he claims were specifically intended by this proclamation, and later named in the bishops register.

> "A disputation between the Father and the Son a Book of the Old God and the new; Godly Prayers; the Christian state of Matrimony; the Burying of the Mass; the Sum of Scripture; Mattens and Even-song, seven Psalms, and other heavenly Psalms,

2 John Foxe - Actes and monumentes vol IV p. 678

with commendations in English; on exposition upon the seventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians; the chapters of Moses called Genesis; the chapters of Moses called Deuteronomy; the Matrimony of Tyndale; Davids Psalter in English; the Practise or Prelates, Hortulus animae, in English; A.B.C against the clergy; the Examination of William Thorpe, & c"[1]

Despite continuing vigilance the English authorities experienced little success in preventing the importation of further prohibited texts. In Antwerp Hacket managed to bring lawsuits against both Christoffel Ruremund in 1526, and the Antwerp merchant Richard Hermans in 1528. Both cases were eventually dismissed, due to Dutch resentment at the attempted interference of a foreign power. Without the co-operation of the Dutch authorities, there could be little hope of suppressing the flow of prohibited books into England.

The case against Ruremund[2] in 1526, and that against a

1 Foxe 'op cit' pg 679

2 M.E. Kronenberg 'op cit' p. 148 - At first the Margrave decided that the books should be burnt, the printer banished and part of his goods confiscated.

second printer Steven Meirdman[1], who fled to England in 1546, to escape proceedings against him, for printing heretical books, bears witness to the difficulties and risks taken by those involved in the printing of reformed tracts. Since the consequences for printing books which were prohibited in England, could be equally severe on the continent, many publishers were reluctant to be too closely associated with their works. Generally, they used one or more of three devices to circumvent detection by the appropriate authorities. In many cases they simply omitted to give any indication of their identity or the location of the press. Alternatively, they would use a pseudonym, or a false address, or in some cases both. Such an example is to be found in the Colophon of 'A compendious olde treatyse shewynge howe that we ought to have the scriptures in Englyshe' which reads "Marlborow in the laden of Hessen by me Hans Luft in

1 Colin Clair - On the printing of certain reformation books Library 5th ser. 18 1963 p 276 Meirdman is recorded as living in the parish of St.- Mary-at-Hill Billingsgate ward in the 1549 returns for aliens. He fled to London in 1546 to escape the proceedings instigated by the Conseil de Brabant.

in the yere of owre Lorde MCCCCC and XXX"[1].

In a similar way dates too are often inaccurate. According to Steele[2] this is particularly true of books issued after the renewed persecutions of 1530, which led to the imprisonment and death of Bayfield, an importer of reformation literature.

The true identity of the men who printed many of the reformation books remains unknown. It is possible that the close comparison of different print faces can help to identify the publisher of a work or set of works. However, the effectiveness of such a method is dependent on a number of factors. In the first place there must be sufficient evidence to prove that a particular type-face emanated from an identifiable press, in order for any comparison to be made at all. Secondly, since there were only a limited number of lettering types available to printers at this time, the

1 A compendious olde treatyse shewynge how we ought to have the scriptures in Englyshe 1530 - Reprint of John Purves defence of the vernacular Bible.

2 Steele holds that in the case of post-1530 books, it is better to rely on internal and external evidence to derive a more accurate date, than that given.

texts must contain certain identifiable features which can be allocated to a particular printer, as his own individual trademark. Examples of appropriate identifying characteristics are: defective lettering, distinctive initials, compartmenting, or woodcuts. Colin Clair used a mixture of these features to prove that seven books originally attributed to the printer Richard Jugge, were really the work of Steven Meirdman[1].

Born in 1510, the son of a well-to-do farmer, Steven Meirdman first began printing books in Antwerp in 1543, the same year as he became a freeman of that city. Between 1543 and early 1544 he worked alongside his brother-in-law, Mattheus Crom, who had begun to print in 1537. After Crom's death, Meirdman continued with the business, until he was forced to flee to England in 1546, after which date the business passed into the hands of Crom's widow. Meirdman continued to print works in England from 1550 onwards, when he was granted a licence for five years. On the succession of Mary he fled once again, this time to Emden, where he remained until his death.

1 C. Clair - p 275 - attributes to the press of Meirdman STC no's 3765 10488, 1270, 16982, 16964, 18877, 2852

Meirdman acquired much of his printing material from Crom, whose works were characterised by a device consisting of a reproduction of his signature. Both Crom and Meirdman's works are further characterised by a flawed gothic T, which appears in a 1538 version of the New Testament, known to have been printed by Crom, and by distinctive woodcuts and ornamentation.

Despite the prolific output of books, bearing Meirdman's trademarks, there is not one book which carries the name of its printer, because of the Emperor's prohibition against the printing of English books. Further prohibitions forbidding the importing of books into England, probably made it expedient to use the name of the English printer, Richard Jugge, thus helping the books to go undetected. Clair[1] holds that Meirdman probably also printed books for G Walter Lynne, and for John Bale, who is known to have been resident in Antwerp during this time. He also suggests that Meirdman may have been responsible for one or two of the early books of John Day and William Seres, on the basis that their 1549 Folio Bible bears little resemblance to Day's later work, and has a type print

1 Clair's article contains an extensive list of books which he believes can be attributed to Meirdman.

more characteristic of Meirdman and the Low Countries.

Throughout his life Meirdman continued to promulgate the Protestant cause, through his diverse printing activities. He was largely successful in escaping detection, through the use of pseudonyms, and his foresight in fleeing from danger in the face of adverse change. A second printer equally dedicated to the reformation cause was Christoffel van Ruremund, who also printed under the name of Endhoven. Ruremund began work in 1523, at first printing only orthodox works. He first came to prominence in 1526, when he was the subject of a lawsuit raised by Hacker, over the printing of Tyndale's New Testament. Ruremund was eventually acquitted, and for three years following the magistrates proclamation forbidding the printing of the English New Testament, in Antwerp, he seems to have returned to the printing of orthodox liturgical works[1].

However, Ruremunds connection with Tyndale's New Testament did not stop here. In 1528, his brother Hans

1 Gordon Duff - A Century of the English Book Trade - states that between 1527-1530 Ruremund printed 6 Sarum books, 2 Missals, 2 Horzie, a processional, a 'hymni cum notis', and an almanack in English.

is recorded in English eccleciastical records as abjuring his involvement in printing 1,500 New Testaments in Antwerp, and further for smuggling five hundred of these into England. Since none of these books are now extant it is impossible to say whether this incident refers to the first batch of 1526 New Testaments, or to a second edition.

In 1530, Christoffel came to England himself, again in connection with the sale of English New Testaments. he too was apprehended and imprisoned at Westminster where he died in 1531. His widow continued to print further books for the English market, including additional versions of Tyndale's New Testament, after it had been revised by Joye in 1534. The last New Testament from Ruremund's Press can probably be dated as 1535, although there is still some debate over the origins of three further versions printed in the following year.

In contrast to Ruremund, John Hoochstraten chose to conceal his identity in two ways, either by the use of false address, or most commonly a pseudonym as well. M.E. Kronenberg[1] believes that Hoochstraten and the

1 Kronenberg p 153 - Points to 1526-1531 and 1535-1540 as the two gaps in Hoochstraten's known career.

Hans Luft, who printed at 'Marlborow in the lande of Hesse', are the same person. In support of this she points to the remarkable correspondence between the two gaps in Hoochstraten's career, where no publications can be found bearing his name, and the simultaneous activity of Hans Luft during these two periods.

The name Hans Luft is an interesting choice for a pseudonym, as the real Hans Luft was a well known printer of Lutheran works in Wittenberg, between 1523-1572. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that the large number of English books published during this time can be ascribed to this particular Hans Luft with any certainty. On the contrary evidence would seem to suggest the opposite. Luft is known to have been responsible for the issue of a number of books in Wittenberg, during the period in question. It therefore seems highly unlikely that he was also issuing books from Marburg at this time, if indeed Marburg was the location of this second press[1].

John Hoochstraten began his printing career, under his own name, in Antwerp, 1525. He is known to have worked with Hadrianus Tilianus, printing orthodox works until

1 Duff - Doubts that Marlborow is the correct location for the printing of these works.

around 1526. However, it seems likely that he sympathised with the new ideas, in the light of his printing connections with Simon Corver, a Dutch printer of reformation books.

1526-1531 marks the first of two gaps in Hoochstraten's career, and nothing is known of his movements. However, at the same time Luft published his first batch of English books, most of which were controversial works of Tyndale and Frith. Kronenberg holds that this is too much of a coincidence , for the two events to be unrelated. She agrees with Duff that these works were not printed in Marlborow, and cites evidence which she believes points to Antwerp as the actual location of Hoochstraten's press[1].

Hoochstraten surfaced again in 1531, this time as the technical assistant of Christien Pedersen at Lubeck, and later at Malmo until 1535. This date marks the beginning of the second period of activity by Hans Luft of Marlborow, during which time he printed several works of Tyndale, and Bullinger's Christian State of Matrimony. In 1540 Hoochstraten began printing at his father's address, where he published mainly school books until his death in 1543.

1 Kronenberg p 157

There is one further major publisher who used a pseudonym to escape detection. Martin de Keyser began his publishing career in Antwerp in 1524. At first he used a distinctive device, of a shield bearing his initials and supported by two lions, with the motto 'Sola fides sufficit'. By 1530 he considered a motto expressing such definite religious allegiances far too dangerous, and therefore changed it to 'Spes mea Jesus'. In 1531 he published his first English book, George Joyes translation of the Prophete Isaye. The book dated to May 1531 bears the colophon printed in 'Strassburg by Balthassar Beckent'. According to Kronenberg the only other occasion when de Keyser used a pseudonym was in May 1532 when he published Thomas Abell's attack on King Henry's divorce 'Invicta Veritas'. All remaining prohibited works which can be traced back to his press, are lacking in either a printer's name or address.

When Martin de Keyser died in 1536, his widow continued the business, However, there is no evidence that she continued to print prohibited books. In twelve years of printing de Keyser issued a prolific number of publications, approximately one hundred and seventy in all. Of these the only Protestant tracts are printed in French or English, and obviously intended for immediate export.

Steele[1] identifies five books which can be definitely assigned to Martin de Keyser by type and initials, and a further five which he thinks probably emanated from de Keyser's press. Kronenberg disagrees with Steele's allocation of four of these titles[2].

1 Steele p 222-225 - Type B books - definitely attributable to de Keyser.

I) The praier and coplaint of the plowman unto Christ (ed G.Joye) II) The prophete Jonas III) The prophete Isaye (trans G. Joye) IV Letters of Johan Ashwell (G.Joye) V) The exposition of the fyrst Epistle of Seynt John.

p 219-222 - Type A books - probably attributable to de Keyser

I) An answere to Thomas Mores dialogue (W Tyndale) II) Disputacion of purgatory (J Frith) III) A supplication (Robert Barnes) IV) Another book against Rastel (J Frith) V) The Paternoster, the creed,and the commandmentes of god in Englysh with many other ....

2 Kronenberg p 160 - Disagrees with Steele on type A no I, II, IV and V which she claims can only doubtfully be attributed to de Keyser she adds a further 10 books to the list STC no's 61, 85, 2351, 2372, 2778, 2826, 2830, 5543.

In his choice of English books de Keyser by no means confined himself to prohibited works. In 1533 he printed a devotional Roman Catholic work: The Mystic Sweet Rosary, in addition to grammatical works by Wolsey and Colet. It was this willingness to print a variety of works, alongside the English and French protestant works, which probably helped him to so successfully escape detection.

In addition to these major publishers, prohibited books were also printed by others who are less well known. Often these minor printers issued only one or two English titles; as in the case of Augustine Fries, who, issued two English books by Hooper, from his Zurich press, in 1547, before re-locating in Strassburg, and turning his attention to the Spanish works of Franzisco de Enzimas in 1550/51.

Although gradual progress is being made in this field, there are still many uncertainties surrounding the identity of many of the printers. The lack of distinguishing marks such as devices or accurate colophons, means that the real contribution of certain printers is often badly under-estimated. Gordon Duff[1], believes that the work of Christopher Froschauer is one

1 Duff - A century of the English book trade

such example. Froschauer printed a large number of English books, with either a false imprint, or no imprint at all. His earliest publications, issued in Zurich, can be dated as 1521. He is also known to have published under the pseudonyms of Hanse Hitprik[1], and Conrad Freeman[2], using the false locations of 'Winchester' and 'Grenewych' respectively.

The printing of prohibited books for the English market was not always a good financial proposition, as Strassburg printer John Schott found out, when he agreed to print a number of English works at the request of Roye and Hutchyns. Duff reprints the report of Hermann Rintz sent to Wolsey on October 4th 1528, in which he wrote:

> "In the presence of the consuls, judges and senators of Frankfort, I compelled John Schott the printer, on oath to confess how many books of that sort he had printed in the english, german, french, or any other languages. And on taking the

1 William Turner - Rescuynge of the romishe fox - colophon "Imprynted her at Winchester 1534 4 nonas Martiu by me Hanse Hitprik"

2 Martin Luther Faythfull admoynicion of a certen tru pastor - colophon "Imprinted at Grenewych by Conrade Freeman in the month of May 1554.

oath he acknowledged that he had only printed 1,000 copies of nine signatures in the english language, and this by the orders of Roye and Huchyns, who being in want of money were not able to pay for the books that were printed, and much less to procure their being printed in other languages"[1].

Steele[2] identifies two books which he believes to have come from the press of Schoot, at the request of Roye and Barlow. Of the two works 'Rede me and be not wrothe', and 'The Dialogue of the father and the son', no extant copies remain of the latter, in its original form. However, Walter Lynnes 1550 work 'A true belief in Christ' consists of the original sheets of the dialogue, with the exception of the preface and title page.

Of the remaining printers Jan Petersen of Amsterdam is known to have issued only one work, 'A heavenly act Concernyng how man shal lyve'. Simon Cock of Antwerp is attributed with the issue of various prophecies from the Holy Scriptures in 1536, and possibly one or two of the quarto editions of the New Testament issued

1 Duff 'ibid'

2 Steele p 192

in the same year. William Vorstermann was also at one time held to be the printer of one or two early editions of the English New Testament, but this opinion is now generally held to be erroneous, the only work that can be attributed to him with any certainty, being the Roman-Catholic 'Rosary of our lady in Englyshe' (Circa 1525).

English exiles seeking to have their works published abroad rarely attached themselves to one particular printer, for example William Tyndale and George Joye employed the services of a number of different people, throughout their careers. The choice of printer depending very much on their own location. In some cases, the printers themselves would be forced to flee, as in the case of Steven Meirdman. On at least one occasion Tyndale was forced to employ more than one printer in the compiling of his New Testament. The first issue of this English work ran into difficulties in 1525, when the printer Peter Quentell of Cologne, was ordered, by the German authorities, to cease printing the work. When he had only reached sheet K. Tyndale was forced to flee from Cologne to Worms, taking the few finished sheets with him.

This was not a unique occurence. In his discussion of the Marburg press, Steele[1] notes, that some disturbance can be detected both in the printing of the Pentateuch and in the 'Practise of Prelates' in 1530. The latter is subject to irregular printing, and is also the last of Tyndale's works to be printed by the Marburg press. In the case of the former only Genesis and Numbers are printed in Marburg type, whilst the remaining three books are printed in Roman type. Genesis in particular is marked off from the others in several ways, whilst the others are found as a complete work without Genesis. These factors which are all indicative of some unknown disturbance in the printing process.

After 1538 many of the exiled reformers seem to have favoured Switzerland as a place of refuge, and hence there was a decline in the Antwerp book trade. Although a reasonable amount is now known about a handful of the reforming printers, little is known about the remainder. Some of them undoubtedly printed the prohibited books for financial reasons alone, others like Meirdman and Ruremund took great risks in furthering the cause of the reformation.

1 Steele p 206

I EXILED AUTHORS OF ENGLISH PROTESTANT WORKS 1525-1548

When Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the the door of Wittenburg Castle Church in 1517, English attitudes towards clerical abuse were so diverse that Luther's books could be legally imported into the country until 1520. The initial interest in his work seems to have been limited to a small group of humanists, who had already recognised the need for clerical reform.[1] It was only towards the end of 1520, when the Edict of Worms[2] along with political considerations, and opposition from the universities, resulted in the prohibiting of Lutheran works.[3]

In the meantime these books circulated freely. In Cambridge the White Horse Tavern became the meeting

1 C.S. Meyer - Henry VIII burns Luthers books, 12 May 1521 - J.Ecc Hist 9 173-187 Oct 58.
John Dorne bookseller in Oxford "sold less than 2,000 books in 1520 and of those 1,850 or so, only, 12 or 13 were by Luther" p 178 All were in Latin

2 Also the Papal Bulls Exsurge Domine, June 1520, and Decet Romanum January 1521.

3 C.S Meyer 'ibid' p 183
Luthers books were burnt to show Francis that both the Pope and the English crown would stand by Charles if Francis went to war against him

place of a number of young scholars who met to discuss Lutheran ideas. From this group emerged some of the most prominent voices in the English reformation. William Tyndale, Robert Barnes, Thomas Cranmer, and Thomas Bilney can all be numbered amongst its members.

By the end of 1520, Cambridge was beginning to attract the attention of the authorities. William Clebsch[1] holds that before the year was out, Luther's books had been burnt at Cambridge, as well as other places in the realm. However, there seems little evidence to substantiate this[2]. Carl Meyer, holds that Luther's books, were more likely, first burnt at St. Pauls Cross, London, 12 May 1521[3], and not Cambridge as is often assumed. This also accords better with his theory that the root of hostility towards Lutheran books, in 1521, was largely the consequence of a political agreement, between England, the Emperor and

1 William Clebsch - Englands earliest protestants - Yale Uni. Press p 11,12

2 C.S. Meyer 'op cit' pg 179 - The evidence of the burning of Luther's books rests upon the accounts of John Denne and William Medew, proctors, but neither place nor date is mentioned, and Meyer holds that the expenses fit in better with events in London on 12 May 1521

3 Meyer 'ibid' p 180

the Pope[1], although it seems unlikely that this was Henry's only motive in burning Luther's works, particularly as he continued to oppose the spread of Lutheran ideas within his realm, for the remainder of his reign.

Wolsey's renewed attempts to eradicate Lutheranism from England, by a further spate of book burnings in 1524, and subsequent proceedings against Lutheran sympathisers, in the following years, caused the flight of a number of reformers. Some, like William Tyndale were never to return, whilst others like Simon Fish and Robert Barnes found momentary favour at the court of Henry VIII, or returned as did John Frith to be arrested, and burnt for persistent heresy. John Hooper, William Turner and John Bale, all returned on the accession of Edward VI, to take up office in the anglican church, for the short duration of the king's reign.

The fragmentary nature of the evidence available, makes it difficult to accurately reconstruct their movements on the continent. Often they moved frequently or in haste to escape detection, travelling between Germany, Switzerland, the Low Countries, Malmo and Lubeck.

1 Meyer 'ibid' p 184

The external evidence of these movements is often scant or inaccurate. Church records, and contemporary letters, give occasional indications of the reformers movements at a specific time. Similarly, the colophons in their books connect various reformers with specific locations, at certain dates, although these are largely unreliable, as to date, place and the publisher's name. Of some, very little information is available, outside of the occasional autobiographical reference, or a brief allusion to their work in the tract of a contemporary reformer. Of the more prolific writers, much more is known. The movements of the more prominent reformers such as William Tyndale and Robert Barnes are well attested by contemporary church and lay records.

Little is known about the early life of William Tyndale, one of the most prominent early reformers. The son of a yeoman farmer Tyndale was probably born in the Welsh borders[1], at a date generally agreed to be

1 Foxe - Actes and Monuments - London Vol V p 114
G.E.Duffield - The work of William Tyndale. Courtney Library of Reformation Classics 1 1964 - specifies Tyndales place of birth as probably the Vale of Berkeley on the borders between Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire. - Introduction xiv

between 1490-1495. According to Foxe, Tyndale "was brought up from a child, in the university of Oxford, where he by long continuance, grew up and increased as well in the knowledge of tongues, and other liberal arts, as especially in the knowledge of the Scriptures."[1] Records from Magdalen Hall for Easter 1510, confirm that Tyndale was a member of the hall at this time[2]. He graduated from Oxford as a Bachelor of Arts in July 1512, and secured his Masters degree in July 1515. Shortly after, he left for Cambridge, where he remained until the close of 1521, when he became tutor to the children of Sir John Walsh at Little Sodbury in Gloucestershire.

There is no record of the reasons for Tyndale's move to Cambridge in 1515, but it was possibly due to the university's reputation as a centre of revived learning. Additionally, Erasmus had left Cambridge only a year previously and the influence of his teaching was still strong within the university. It was probably during these six years that Tyndale came into contact with Lutheran ideas, and met many of those who were to work alongside him in exile.

1 Foxe Vol V p 115

2 Dictionary of national biography - Tyndale was registered under the family alias Hychyns. Vol. LVII P 424

He remained in the service of John Walsh for little over a year. During this time, he translated Erasmus' 'Enchiridion Militis Christiani', possibly to defend himself against the local clergy, whom he had so alienated that they brought him before William Malvern, Chancellor of the See, on a charge of heresy. Foxe records that Tyndale was reproached, but then released, as his beliefs were judged to be orthodox. Shortly after Tyndale left Gloucestershire, and moved to London. Foxe claims that Tyndale was forced to leave by the malice of the county priests. More likely Tyndale went to London in the hope of gaining the patronage of Cuthbert Tunstall, the newly created Bishop of London. When it became clear that Tunstall's conservative beliefs would prevent him from offering Tyndale a place in his household, and thus guaranteeing him safety whilst he translated the New Testament into English, Tyndale first acted as preacher at St. Dunstans-in-the-West, and then in spring 1524 he left for Germany[1]. On May 27 he matriculated at the University of Wittenberg, where he remained until April of 1525.

During this time Tyndale worked upon his translation of the New Testament. He was aided in this task by

1 Foxe 'op cit' p 117

William Roy, who acted as his amanuensis. Roy, who had also studied at Cambridge, was possibly the son of a native of Brabant, to whom letters patent of denization were issued in London, on 3 Feb. 1512.[1] Roy who had become an observant friar of the Franciscan order at Greenwich, was aided in his flight to Germany by Humphrey Monmouth, who had also sponsored Tyndale's first attempt to translate the scriptures into English. Clebsch records that Roy matriculated as a student at Wittenberg on June 10 1525 under the title "Guilhelmus Roy ex landino" [2]

In August 1525, Tyndale and Roy moved to Cologne where they attempted to print the first edition of their English New Testament, at the press of Peter Quentel. The attempt was a failure. Quentel had only reached folio K when his work was discovered by John Cochlaeus, previously Dean of the Church of the Blessed Virgin of Frankfurt. Cochlaeus obtained an injunction against the printers, and warned Wolsey to be on the look out for work. Tyndale and Roy, gathered up their translation and fled to Worms, where they successfully printed the New Testament early in 1952.

1 Dictionary of National Biography Vol XLI p 371

2 Clebsch 'op cit' p 229

The two parted in spring of 1526. Roy was joined by Barlow , and in 1528 they published a satirical work aimed at Wolsey[1]. In 1529 Roy or Barlow issued a second work: "A proper dialogue between a gentillman and a husbandman". This consisted of an edited version of a lollard work, which was changed slightly to make it more applicable to the contemporary situation. Two further works issued from the pen of Roy. In 1527 he translated into English, the originally Dutch work 'A brefe dialoge bitwene a Christen Father and his Son'[2]. Two years later in 1529 he published, in a single volume, a collection of translations of the writings of Erasmus and Luther. William Barlow , was responsible for the issue of just one further work of note. 'A dialogue descrybyng the orygynal ground of these Lutheran faccyons'[3], which was published in London by

1 William Roy "Rede me and be not wrothe, for I say no thynge but trothe". Schoot, Strassburg 1528

2 Robert Steele - Notes on English Book Printed Abroad 1525-1548 Trans Bibl 11, 1911 p 195 - notes that it had been thought that all copies of this work had been destroyed - but that the book 'The true belief in Christ' printed by Walter Lynne in 1550 consists of the original sheets of 'The Dialogue', with a new preface and title page.

3 STC 1462 3

W.Rastell in 1531. This work which examines the origins and contents of Luther's teachings, portrays Lutheranism as a threat both to the spiritual and social welfare of the realm, bearing witness to Barlowe's repudiation of his earlier Lutheran beliefs.

After 1531 Barlow became a favourite of Anne Boleyn[1], who made him prior of Haverfordwest. By 1535, his letters to Cromwell show that he had become a zealous reformer, evoking the hostility of the local clergy. Barlowe's career progressed quickly, and by mid 1536 he had been consecrated as a bishop, receiving the see of St. David's in the Bow Church. He remained here until 1549, and attempted to introduce radical reforms into his diocese, condemning relics, pilgrimages, and the worship of saints. His determination to reform his diocese predictably aroused the hostility of the clergy, who denounced him as a heretic to the Council of Wales.

Barlowe continued to take an active role in ecclesiastical politics throughout Henry's reign, signing the articles of 1536, and vainly advocating changes in the Six Articles of 1539. At the accession of Edward VI to the throne, Barlow's attacks upon

1 Dictionary of National Biography Vol III p 230

images brought him to the attention of the Duke of Somerset. In 1548 he was given the bishopric of Bath and Wells, where he remained until the accession of Mary, and the restoration of the Roman Catholic Church. Like many of his contemporaries Barlow sought refuge in Germany for the duration of Mary's reign, returning to England in 1559, when he was made Bishop of Chichester, a title he retained until his death in 1568.

Tyndale's association with Roy had not been a happy one. He was later to write unfavourably of Roy's character, in the preface to his work 'The Parable of the Wicked Mammon' published on 8 May 1528. When Wolsey read Roy's book 'Rede me and be not wrothe' he assigned the work to Tyndale, and planned to secure his arrest. Tyndale was forced to take refuge under the protection of Philp of Hesse, in Marburg. It was here that he wrote and published both 'The Parable of the Wicked Mammon' and 'The Obedience of a Christian man', in May and October of 1528 respectively.

Early in 1529 Tyndale returned to the Low Countries, where he remained until his death in 1536. Between the years of 1529 and 1533, Tyndale engaged in a dialogue with Sir Thomas More, who in June 1529 published his dialogue defending the Catholic faith. In 1531 Tyndale published An answer to Mores work. This prompted More

to reply in two volumes which were published over the course of the next two years. During this time Tyndale continued to work on his biblical translations, and by 1534, had completed work on the Five books of the Pentateuch, and The book of Jonah. A generally accepted tradition claims that he left the manuscripts of Joshua and II Chronicles with John Rogers[1]. In 1530 he also published 'the Practice of Prelates' which was strongly critical both of Henry's divorce and Wolsey's administration. The tract totally alienated Henry VIII from Tyndale, and despite his initial reaction to Tyndale's 'Obedience of a Christian man', in April 1531 he instructed Stephen Vaughan to make no further attempts to bring Tyndale back to England under a promise of safe conduct. Towards the end of 1531, Henry went yet further in his attack upon Tyndale, demanding that the Emperor should return Tyndale to England, in order to prevent him spreading futher sedition. Tyndale again fled, only returning to Antwerp in 1533 after danger had passed.

From mid 1534 he dwelt with the merchant Thomas Poyntz, a relative of Lady Walsh. In 1535 he befriended a student Henry Philips, who appeared to be interested in the reform movement. Philips betrayed Tyndale to the imperial officers, but there is no evidence to suggest

1 Duffield 'op cit' introduction XVIII

that he was in the pay of the English government. Tyndale was imprisoned in May 1535 in the castle of Vilvorde. Despite the pleas from the merchants of Antwerp that Cromwell or Henry should intervene on Tyndale's behalf no action was taken. Tyndale was tried, and convicted of heresy in August of 1536. In October of that year he was strangled and his body burnt at Vilvorde.

Tyndale's real importance has always been seen as lying within his work as a translator, as it was through his New Testament, that the early reformers were able to provide the ordinary people with access to the teaching of Christ in their own language. He was also the first person to make an English translation from the original biblical languages.

Tyndale was also willing to acknowledge the difficulties of such a work of translation, and continually revised his work with each successive edition. Just how important he considered this process of revision, can be seen from his quarrel with George Joye in 1534. Joye mistakenly commissioned the printing of a version of the New Testament which he had recently revised. Tyndale was so incensed by Joye's action, that in the preface of his own, soon to be published, revision of the Scriptures, he openly

criticised Joye for his poor comprehension of the Greek and Hebrew languages.

Despite its flaws, Tyndale's New Testament, made a vital contribution to the Protestant cause in England. Along with his other works, it resulted in Sir Thomas More, labelling him, as 'the captain of English heretics'[1]. To his contemporary reformers, his work gave the people access to the truth of God, but to the hierarchy it presented a dangerous threat. By the close of 1526, both Tunstall and Archbishop Warham had ordered all copies of Tyndale's New Testment to be surrendered, on threat of excommunication. In May 1527 Warham took things one step further, and sought to buy copies of Tyndale's work in Antwerp, to prevent them from reaching England.

Tyndale's skill and importance as a translator is well appreciated. However, his role as an author of polemical works is often underestimated. The Obedience of a Christian man[2], was the first English work to set

1 Steven Haas - Simon Fish, William Tyndales, and Sir Thomas Mores Lutheran conspiracy J.Ecc.Hist 23 125-136 April '72. p 127

2 William Tyndale - The Obedience of a Christian man. Hans Luft (Hoochstraten) 1528.

down the two foundation stones of the reform movement; the supremacy of the scriptures in matters spiritual, and the supremacy of the King in matters temporal. When Anne Boleyn first introduced the work to Henry VIII, it was this latter principle which he found so pleasing. The importance of the 'Obedience' lay not in its polemical nature, but rather in its political implications. Tyndale's works were certainly well respected by his fellow reformers, who freely acknowledged their appeal to the King, and their importance to the people. Bale described 'The Christian Obedience, the Parable of the Wycked Mammon (and) the III chapters of Matthew' as amongst a number of early works "whereby the people were then taught how to love God, and how to obey their Princes and Magistrates". He also acknowledged that they "maked the kynges grace more faythful fryndes in those dayes"[1], than both the Bishops and the Priests.

There is perhaps one other area in which Tyndale's influence is often under-estimated, namely the possibility that he greatly influenced the work of contemporary reformer Simon Fish. In 1528, Anne Boleyn was to place a second work into the hands of Henry VIII. Its author was Simon Fish, and the work 'A

1 John Bale (Stalbrydge). The Epistle Exhoratorye of an Engylshe Christen - Widow C. Ruremund - Antwerp 1544. STC 1291 Aiiii v

Supplication for the Beggar[1]. Henry was so pleased by the ideas contained within the work that he sent for Fish and offered him royal protection, as a potentially valuable ally in the struggle with Rome.

The 'Supplication' bears many similarities to Tyndale's 'Obedience', both in content and style. There is the same attack on clerical abuse, and the same assertion of the king's sole right to determine matters of state. Steven Haas believes that the underlying similarities in the two works can be accounted for, if Fish had joined Tyndale, when he fled to the Low Countries at the end of 1527[2]. He finds several pieces of external evidence, which suggest that Fish had well established links with Tyndale, the two most important being that Fish acted as an agent in the sale of Tyndale's New Testament, and that this brought him into contact with the merchant Richard Herman, who was accused of offering lodgings to Tyndale. Secondly, it seems that Thomas More, also linked the two together, in that they were both involved in attempts to advance the Lutheran theology. However, More also saw Barlow as a part of Tyndale's group, and there is no real evidence that

1 Simon Fish - A Supplication for the Beggars. Antwerp . Grapheus 1528

2 Steven Haas 'op cit' p 133

Barlow ever worked alongside Tyndale. Certainly by 1526 Fish had established himself as an agent for the sale of Tyndale's New Testament and this seems to be the main motive for his second flight into exile, late in 1527[1]. It is, therefore, conceivable that Fish did join Tyndale in Antwerp, perhaps through the offices of their joint acquaintance Richard Herman.

The remaining two arguments advanced by Haas, are somewhat weaker. If Fish did need help in translating '<u>The Sum of Holye Scripture</u>' from its original Dutch, there is no certainty that it was Tyndale who filled this role. Nor can the fact that they both used the same printer, be held as strong evidence that it was Tyndale who introduced Fish to the printers involved.

Comparatively little is known about the early life of Simon Fish. A graduate of Oxford, and a lawyer, Fish moved to London in 1525, where he became a member of

1 Clebsch 'op cit'

Clebsch finds difficulty in the idea that Fish would be forced to leave England twice in such a small space of time, and thinks that his involvement in the play, and his role as an agent for Tyndale's New Testaments were both contributory factors to the one exile.

Grays Inn. As part of a circle who opposed the wealth of the church, in 1526 he seems to have taken part in a play, which held Wolsey up to ridicule. The play which incurred the displeasure of Wolsey, forced Fish to flee the country. It was during this time abroad that Fish is thought to have associated with Roy and Tyndale, who taught him about Luther's ideas. Fish returned to London in December of 1526, where he remained until the end of 1527, when his bookselling activities attracted the attention of the authorities, and forced him to flee once again.

With or without the help of Tyndale, during 1529, Fish issued his only two reforming works, 'A Supplication for the Beggars', and 'The Sum of Holye Scripture'. The first, a polemical attack on the clergy, earned him the support of Henry VIII[1]. The second, a comprehensive

1 Accounts vary as to how the book found its way into the hands of the king. Traditionally the most popular is that Anne Boleyn gave the book to the king. Two other alternatives are offered. 1) That the book was presented to the King by two London merchants brought before him, for illegally importing the work or 2) That copies of the work were scattered amongst the crowd on the day of the opening of parliament, and that one of these copies came into the hands of Henry.

expression of Lutheran beliefs aroused the enmity of More. On account of the 'Supplication' Fish was offered the protection of the king, and summoned to return to England. This he did in 1530. Henry probably saw, in the work of Fish, a weapon which he used against the church in his struggle to obtain a divorce. Thus the ideas expressed in the 'Supplication' were to play a prominent part in bringing Henry to break with Rome[1]. Unfortunately, Fish did not live long enough to see his ideas come to fruition in the 1534 Act of Supremacy. Fish died of the plague in 1531. His widow married James Bainham, who was burnt as a Protestant martyr in 1532.

Fish was not alone in finding favour at the English court. Both Robert Barnes, and John Bale, enjoyed a similar privilege under the protection of Thomas Cromwell.

John Bale was born at Cove in Suffolk on 21 Nov. 1495, to a family of humble rank. At the age of twelve he

1 Foxe held that the work of Simon Fish was of such importance that both he and the 'Supplication' merited a lengthy piece in the 'Actes and Monuments', even though Fish did not die a martyr's death.

joined to the Carmelite convent at Norwich, and was sent to Cambridge, by his order in 1520. He took his B.D. in 1528, and obtained his D.D. in the early 1530's. In 1534, Bale, who now held the living of Thorden in Suffolk, was called before the Archbishop of York to answer for a sermon, in which he denounced the practices of the church, and, therefore he must have embraced the Protestant faith at some time during the early 1530's. The immediate causes of this were probably his growing disillusionment with the Carmelite order, and the persuasive powers of the Protestant courtier Lord Wentworth. Bale left his order in 1536, but continued to preach in Suffolk, until the local Justices of the Peace brought him to the attention of Thomas Cromwell and the Privy Council. Cromwell recognising Bales potential, as a popular satirist, took him into his employ. Bale began work on a series of short verse plays, which roused popular sentiments against the Pope and the clergy. However, Bale's outspokenness made him many enemies, and when Cromwell fell from power in 1540, Bale and his family were forced to flee to Germany.

Bale continued to write throughout his time in exile, and issued a number of works, by which he sought to influence the situation at home. It was during this time that he turned his attention to the Lollard martyr

John Oldcastle[1], and the trial records of Anne Askew[2], who had been burnt at Smithfield in July 1546. Leslie Fairfield holds that these two works are the direct outcome of the ideas expressed in Bale's 1545 work, 'The Image of Both Churches', in which he maintained that a few pure Christians existed in every age. Fairfield believes that Bale chose to publish accounts of the trials of Askew and Oldcastle because "to sway peoples minds in England and to win their hearts" he needed "fresh stories of real, credible (and preferably English) Protestant heroes"[3]. Bale found in these two figures the examples he needed, to persuade the people in England of the righteousness of the Protestant cause.

In 1547, when Edward ascended the throne, Bale returned to England, where he was appointed first as rector of

1 John Bale - A brefe chronycle concerynge the examinacyon of Sir John Oldcastell. Antwerp 1546.

2 John Bale - The first examinacyon of Anne Askew - Wesel von der Straten. 1546. The later examination of Anne Askewe - Wesel van der Straten 1547.

3 Leslie Fairfield. John Bale and the development of Protestant Hagiography in England. J. EC. HIs 24 145-160 April '73 28 'ibid' p 150

Bishop-Stoke in Hampshire, and then of Swaffham in Norfolk. In 1552 he was offered the See of Ossory in Ireland. His uncompromising attitude in matters of reform, earned him the hatred of his priests.

When Edward died, and the mass was restored, Bale fled once again to Holland, where he remained until 1559. Returning to England on the accession of Elizabeth, Bale took up the post of prebendary in Canterbury until his death in 1563.

By 1563, Bale had written approximately eighty-five works. His greatest contribution for the Reformation lay in his ability to rouse the indignation of the ordinary people, against the abuses of the church. Additionally, his accounts of John Oldcastle and William Thorpe helped to give the Protestant cause, a sense of antiquity and continuity within the English tradition.

Robert Barnes, a contemporary of John Bale at Cambridge, was also to enjoy the patronage and protection of Thomas Cromwell between the years 1531-1539. However, unlike Bale, Barnes was not to go abroad on the fall of Cromwell, but rather to suffer the death of a heretic, at Smithfield in July 1539.

Robert Barnes was born in Lynn, Norfolk. He joined the Augustinian order at an early age. He was sent to study at the University of Louvain, probably between 1514 and 1521. According to Foxe, on his return to Cambridge he was made prior of the Augustinian house where "having some feeling of better learning and authors began in his house to read Terrence, Plutus, and Cicero so that with his industry, pains, and labour ... he made the house shortly to flourish with good letters, and made a great part of the house learned."[1]

Erasmus was also present in Cambridge, for at least part of this time, and it seems strange that there is no record of any correspondence between the two, particularly as both were seemingly interested in the revival of classical learning, within the University. William Clebsch[2] holds that Barnes "brought from Louvain to Cambridge neither a commanding distinction in scholarship nor special familiarity with Luther's works, but rather an interest in classical antiquity".

The writings of Barnes show no evidence that he had a knowledge of Greek or Hebrew, and this could account for the silence between him and Erasmus.

1 Foxe 'op cit' Vol V p 415

2 W. Clebsch 'op cit' p 43

During 1525 Barnes was awarded a Doctor's degree. At about the same time he became acquainted with the writings of Luther, and was converted to Lutheranism, through the offices of Thomas Bilney. On Christmas Eve, 1525, he preached a sermon at St. Edwards church in Cambridge, attacking the abuses within the church, and the special observance of festival days. He was called before the Vice-Chancellor and asked to recant twenty-five heretical articles, from the text of his sermon. Instead of agreeing, Barnes chose to appeal to the judgement of the entire university.

The matter was settled on February 6, when Wolsey's agents arrested Barnes, and searched the rooms of his associates for proscribed books. However, the search proved futile, as the thirty suspects forwarned by Dr. Farman of Queen's college had managed to conceal the books elsewhere.

Cardinal Wolsey examined Barnes on February 8, questioning him as to the content of his sermon[1], in which he had attacked not only the wealth of the church, but also the personal wealth of Cardinal Wolsey.

1 Foxe 'op cit' Vol V p 416 gives a detailed account of Wolsey's converstion with Barnes.

"What! Master doctor", said the cardinal "had you not a sufficent scope in the Scriptures to teach the people, but that by my golden shoes, my pole-axes, my pillars, my golden cushions, my crosses did so sore offend you, that you must make us 'ridiculum caput' amongst the people? We were jollily that day laughed to scorn. Verily it was a sermon more fit to be preached on a stage, than in a pulpit for at last you said, I wear a pair of red gloves (I should say bloody gloves, quoath you), that I should not be cold in the midst of my ceremonies." And Barnes answered "I spake nothing but the truth out of Scriptures, according to my conscience, and according to the old doctors".
And then did Barnes deliver him six sheets of paper written, to confirm and corroborate his sayings."

When Wolsey asked Barnes to submit to his authority, as papal legate, Barnes replied "I thank your grace for your good will I will stick to the Holy Scripture, and to Gods book, according to the simple talent that God hath lent me."[1]. At this point Wolsey committed Barnes to trial.

1 Foxe 'op cit' Vol V p 417

He was tried the following Saturday, before the Bishops of London, Bath, Rochester and St. Asaphs, and found guilty of heresy, on the basis of his twenty five articles. Acting on the advice of Foxe and Gardiner, Barnes abjured, rather than burn. On Sunday, February 11, he knelt during Fisher's sermon at St. Pauls, and carried a faggot in procession around the church[1]. After begging the forgiveness of God, the Church, and the Cardinal, Barnes was absolved, and returned to the Fleet prison, where he remained for six more months.

In August 1526 he was made a House prisoner of the Augustinian friars in London. After further complaints against him, he was transferred to the orders house at Northampton. From here Barnes fled first to Antwerp, and then later to Wittenberg, where he matriculated at the University on June 20, 1533. His sudden flight had been provoked by news that a writ had been issued that he should burn. With the aid of his informant, Master Horne, Barnes had faked his own drowning, in order to obtain more time to escape.

1 Foxe 'op cit' Vol V p 418 - Foxe stated that there were 36 mitred priors, abbots and bishops, as well as the Cardinal, present at the service

Whilst he was abroad, Barnes took the opportunity to publish a treatise defending himself against the twenty five articles, on which he had been accused. The articles show themselves to be as much Lollard as Lutheran, attacking both the clergy, their laws and their wealth, and asserting the place of the Scriptures, as the only true judge of God's laws.

In 1531, Barnes addressed his 'Supplication to Henry VIII'. In it he advocated the free use of the vernacular Bible, and attacked the superstitious ceremonies of the church, in particular the use of images. He also expounded the Lutheran doctrine of justification, and the definition of the church as "that congreagation that is sanctyfied in sprete, redemed with Christes bloud and stykkth fast and suer alonly to the promissis that he made ther yn."[1]

In December 1531, Barnes returned to England, partly at the invitation of Cromwell, and partly to deliver Luther's opinion of the issue of the Kings divorce. He used the opportunity to further promote the Protestant cause with both Henry and his subjects. Thomas More was only prevented from arresting him as a relapsed

1 R.Barnes - A supplicayaton Unto Henry VIII Antwerp S.Cock? 1531 STC 1470 Hiv^{r}

heretic, by the offices of Cromwell.

From 1532 Barnes seems to have been in Cromwell's employ. He left England on several occasions, in attempts either to secure approval of Henry's divorce, or in attempts to bring Henry and the Protestant princes of Germany closer together. By 1535, Barnes had been made a royal chaplain, and three years later he was to play an important part in negotiating the marriage of Henry and Anne of Cleves. However, shortly afterwards, despite his recent preferment in the service of the king, Barnes was again to be arrested on the charge of heresy. In Lent 1539, Gardiner preached a sermon on the place of good works in salvation. The following week, Barnes replied in a sermon, which brought him into contravention of the Six Articles. Gardiner complained to Henry, Barnes signed a retraction and asked the Bishop's forgiveness. At Easter Barnes preached another ambiguous sermon, setting forth Lutheran ideas. He was arrested along with his companions Jerome and Garret. An act of attainder was passed against all three, exempting them from the general pardon of 1539. The three were burnt at Smithfield, on July 30, 1540. To some extent the death of Robert Barnes was symptomatic of the waning power of Cromwell. Stephen Gardiner took Barnes sermon and used it as an ideal opportunity to attack Cromwell, as a protector of heretics. Barnes, himself was

was insensitive to the situation. Hence his willingness to antagonise Gardiner for a second time at Easter 1539. Perhaps Barnes relied too much on Cromwell's ability to ensure his release, at a time when Cromwell could not risk public involvements on such an issue. Cromwell himself was arrested for treason in May 1540, and executed on July 28 two days before Barnes.

Barnes contribution to the Reformation was limited to one major aspect. In practical terms, he had the opportunity to present Protestant ideas to Henry, in the two Supplications of 1531 and 1534, and the skill to adapt his ideas to the contemporary situation. Just how far the 1534 version of the Supplication represented a genuine development of Barnes theology, and just how far it was in line with his policy of obedience to the prince cannot be accurately assessed.

Certainly by 1534 he had substantially lessened his attacks on the clergy, conceding the church's right, both to wealth and temporal power, if they were justly deserved. By 1534, his insistence that the hierarchy should owe its allegiance to the king instead of the Pope, would have been particularly welcomed by Henry at this time, as would his insistence on absolute obedience to the king in all matters.

Prior to his own arrest for heresy in 1539, Robert Barnes had taken part in the trial and condemnation of fellow Protestant John Lambert, who was burned at Smithfield in 1538.

Little is known about the early life of John Nicholson, a native of Norwich, who was made a fellow of Queens College Cambridge, at the request of Catherine of Aragon in 1521[1]. Once at Cambridge Lambert came into contact with reforming sympathies, and seems to have been won for the Protestant cause, shortly after his admission to Queens College. John Foxe saw in his conversion the work of Thomas Bilney. Nicholson's talents seemed to lie in the field of translation, and Foxe records that before his enforced exile he "had translated out of both tongues [Latin and Greek] sundry things into the English tongue."[2]

Much of his time on the continent was spent as chaplain to the English house in Antwerp, and it was around this time that he assumed the psueudonym Lambert in an attempt to escape detection. His precautions in this area proved inadequate, for within less than a year Lambert had been accused of heresy "by the accussation

1 National Bibliography. Vol XXXII p 10

2 John Foxe 'op cit' Vol V p 181

of one Barlow"[1], and by 1532 he had been brought back to England and summoned to answer charges of heresy.

Having denied the charges against him, he was examined twice by Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, first at Lambeth and then again later at the bishop's house in Otford. Lambert was accused of holding forty-five erroneous articles, and whilst imprisoned he chose to answer his accusers in writing.

Lambert was given a momentary reprieve by the death of the Archbishop in August 1532, and the rising prominence of Anne Boleyn at Henry's court. Returning to London he spent some time teaching children Latin and Greek, and even contemplated marriage, leaving the priesthood for this purpose. However, in 1536 he once again found himself accused of preaching heresy. This time he was summoned before Cranmer and Latimer, on the charge that he had erroneously condemned the practice of praying to the saints.

Freed once again he continued to teach in London, coming into renewed conflict with the church authorities in 1538. Prompted by a sermon he heard preached upon the sacrament of Holy Communion, by Dr.

1 'ibid'

Taylor in St. Peters church London, Lambert became engaged in a discourse on the matter. Taylor sought the advice of Barnes, who persuaded him to refer the matter to the archbishop. Lambert once again found himself summoned to appear before the archbishop's court to answer to the charge of sacramentarianism. This time Lambert appealed to the King to judge the case for himself in the certainty that the king would "Sumwhat regarde and loke upon hys unworty workemanshyppe."[1]

The King agreed to hear the case, and a commission was issued, summoning the nobility to gather in London to aid Henry in his task. According to Foxe, Henry's motives in this matter were far from pure, and if he is to be believed Lambert was to fall prey to the King's desire to pacify those who were critical of the King's past dealings with the church.

> "Now the time served, if he would take it, easily to remedy all these matters, and pacify the minds of them that were displeased and offenced with him, if only in this matter of John Lambert he

1 John Lambert - <u>A treatyse made by John Lambert unto Kynge Henry VIII concerynge his opynyon on the sacrament of the Aultre</u> - Wesel Denkvan der Straten 1538 pg Avi^{v}

would manifest unto the people how stoutly he would resist heretics and by this new rumour he would bring to pass, not only to extinguish all other former rumours, as it were with one nail to drive out another, but also should discharge himself of all suspicion, in that he now began to be reported to be a favourer of new sects and opinions."[1]

Obviously unaware of the King's intentions, Lambert chose to write a tract expounding his beliefs concerning the sacrament of the Lords Supper. The tract was written at Lambeth, where Lambert was imprisoned prior to his trial, and addressed to Henry VIII, in the belief that he would give Lambert a fair hearing, as "Gods very depute and our Kynge mortall esuynge the ensample before showed of God the kynge immortall."[2]

Lambert was examined before the king and his peers in Westminister Hall on 16 November 1538. At the end of a disputation, which lasted for over five hours, he was condemned to death for denying the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament. A few days later he was taken to Smithfield where he was burnt as a heretic.

1 Foxe 'op cit' Vol. V p 228

2 John Lambert 'op cit' Avii^{r}

His only known work[1], that addressed to Henry VIII, was issued posthumously from the Marburg press of Wesel Denk van der Straten, after its printing had been commissioned by John Bale in 1548.

Bales interest in Lambert was twofold. In the first place Lambert's life presented the early Protestants with a fine example of martyrdom, and encouraged them to hold by their beliefs in a time of adversity. Secondly, the printing of Lambert's work in 1548 is not without significance, as the 1540's marked a period in which the debate over the Lords Supper enjoyed a place of prominence in the reforming literature of the time. Bale probably chose to issue Lambert's tract at this time partially for its comprehensive and learned contribution to the whole debate, and partially to show that the doctrine of the Sacrament was one of some import, at least in the case of Lambert who sacrificed his life rather than accept the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Lambert of course was not the only, nor indeed the first of England's earliest reformers to sacrifice his

1 Lambert is also credited with the translation of various works of Erasmus into the English language.

life for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation. Just four years earlier, in 1533, John Frith had shared in this fate, for the same cause.

Of all the reformers John Frith provides an excellent example of a man who was prepared to defend his personal faith at whatever cost. Born in 1503, in Westerham in Kent, Frith, the son of an innkeeper, was educated at Eton and Kings College Cambridge, obtaining his B.A. in 1525. Clebsch[1] holds that it was here that he first met Tyndale, although Foxe dates the meeting as occurring only after Frith had left Oxford in 1526[2]. Clebsch believes that this dating is too late, and holds that it was probably under the influence of Tyndale that Frith first embraced Protestant ideas, since it was at Oxford that he first came to prominence as an advocate of reforming theology.

However, despite these descrepancies of chronology, there is little uncertainty that Frith became a leading voice amongst reforming circles in Oxford. Certainly his success at expounding his ideas brought the unwelcomed attention of the university authorities upon

1 Clebsch 'op cit' p 79

2 Patrick Hamilton - Dyvers fruitful gatheringes of scripture. Antwerp 1532.

him and his fellow reformers, who upon Wolsey's command were accused of heresy and imprisoned in the fish cellar of the college for a number of months.

Frith eventually fled to the continent in September 1528, after Wolsey had released him on the condition that he should remain within ten miles of Oxford. His exact movements on the continent are uncertain, but it is thought that he may have married in Amsterdam, before progressing to Marburg, where he joined other exiles, including Patrick Hamilton, whose work he translated in 1532.

Frith remained in exile for about six years, and during this time translated Luther's work 'the Revelation of Antichrist'[1]. in 1529. The book once smuggled into England soon found its way onto the list of prohibited books. Two years later Frith published a second work, this time from his own pen. The work 'A disputation

1 A Pistle to the Christen reader by M. Luther: The revelation of Anti-Christ: Anthithesis wherein are compared the works of Christ and the Popes - Hans Luft Marlborow in Hesse (really T. Hoochstraten, Antwerp) 1529

of purgatory'[1], was issued in 1531, from the press of either Simon Cock or Martin de Keyser. Divided into three chapters, each individually directed to Rastell, Sir Thomas More and the Lord of Rochester, the book sought to deny the existence of purgatory, from the three stances of natural philosophy, scripture, and the doctors, respectively.

The actual process of printing the book seems to have been delayed somewhat, by Frith's visit to England in early 1531. The reason for his return is unknown, but according to Foxe, it was to visit the Prior of Reading to win his support for the Protestant cause[2]. According to Foxe, on reaching Reading Frith was mistaken for a vagabond and placed in the stocks. After some time he managed to engineer his release through the help of the local schoolmaster, a Cambridge man. After conversing with Frith in both Latin and Greek, he began to feel sorry for Frith, and thus ensured his release. Unrecognised Frith then managed to make his way back to Antwerp, where he saw his book through the press in summer of 1531.

1 John Frith - A disputatation of purgatory - Simon Cock or Martin de Keyser Antwerp 1531

2 Foxe 'op cit' Vol V p 5

Frith seems to have returned to England once again in July 1532, this time to take an active lead in the small but rapidly growing Protestant church. Moving frequently from place to place Frith sought to conceal himself from his enemies. Although Sir Thomas More had by this time resigned, the warrant for his arrest as a heretic was still in force. Eventually, Frith attempted to leave once again for the continent, but his movements had been closely watched. He and the prior of Reading were arrested at Milton shore, near Southend in Essex, whilst waiting to embark on a boat which would have taken them back to the safety of Holland.

Frith was imprisoned in the Tower of London, and whilst awaiting trial he took to writing once again, producing six works[1] between the time of his imprisonment and

1 Another Book Against Rastell - Thomas Godfrey, London 1537?, Judgement upon William Tracy's Testament - Widow Endhoven - Antwerp 1535, A letter unto athe Faithful followers of Christ - 1532 A mirror of glass to know thyself, 1532, A mirror or looking glass wherin you may behold the sacrament of baptism described - John Day , London 1548. An Answer to M.Mores letter - Widow Endhoven 1533

his death in July 1533. Thus despite Frith's claims to the contrary[1] he seems to have enjoyed a reasonable amount of freedom during his imprisonment. In Lent 1533, his case was brought to the attention of Henry VIII by Dr. Currein, one of the royal chaplains. Currein lamented the fact that as yet nothing had been done to reform Frith, with the result that Henry ordered Frith to be examined before the Duke of Suffolk, Earl of Wiltshire, bishops Stokesley and Gardiner, and Archbishop Cranmer.

On the way to Croydon to be examined by Cranmer he was offered the chance to escape, but refused to take it. At his examination he refused to recant his opinions on the sacrament,and was referred to appear before the Bishops of London, Chichester and Winchester, at St. Pauls, on June 20, 1533. Here once again Frith refused to recant, and was sentenced to death, on the grounds of his opinions on the sacrament.

John Frith was burnt alongside Andrew Hewet at Smithfield on July 4th 1533. The books which he had

1 In Another book against Rastell Frith claimed that he was denied the books which he needed, and needed to conceal his writing materials from his guard.

written whilst in prison, along with the Articles for which he died[1] were later published either in London or on the Continent. Friths work was remarkable for the coherent and reasoned arguments which he used to support the Protestant cause. His contribution towards the reformation, was that of a learned scholar, who earned not only the respect of his fellow reformers, but also that of his opponents. Certainly, Sir Thomas More, at least, realised Friths potential as an enemy of the Roman Catholic Church, and hence his determination to both apprehend Frith, and have him burnt as a heretic. Frith, unlike many of his contemporaries, refused to play upon the anti-clerical sentiments of the ordinary people, but preferred instead to support his own opinions from the scriptures or the works of the doctors, never letting his arguments fall prey to exaggerated or false expressions of anti-clericalism.

John Frith along with William Tyndale is one of the best known of all the early English reformers, and details of his life are readily available. This, however is not the case as far as some of the other reformers are concerned, for example Henry Brinkelow

1 John Frith - The Articles wherfore John Frith died C. Willems Monster 1533

and Thomas Solme.

Henry Brinkelow, the son of a Berkshire farmer, is known to have spent part of his early life as a member of the Franciscan order. His monastic life, however, came to an abrupt halt when he left the order to become a mercer in London. Brinkelow, who later married, and became an adherent of the reformed religion, adopted the pseudonym Roderick Mors when publishing his satirical attacks upon the church. His works eventually attracted the attention of the Bishops, and he was forced to flee abroad to escape arrest.

In 1545 his first work 'A Lamentacion of a Christian'[1] was printed at the press of Mierdman in Antwerp. A second work 'The Supplication of the poor comons'[2] was printed a year later, by an unknown printer. There is some debate over whether the authorship of this can indeed be attributed to Brinkelow at all. A similar problem also arises over an earlier work 'A

1 Henry Brinkelow 'The lamentacion of a Christian against the city of London' Nurenbergh (really S. Mierdman - Antwerp) 1545

2 Henry Brinkelow 'The Supplication of the poor Comons' Printer unknown 1546

Supplication to Henry VIII'[1] 1544. His final work 'The coplaint of Roderyck Mors'[2] was printed posthumously two years after Brinkelow's death in 1546, and is attributed to the London press of William Seres.

Thomas Solme, one time canon of St. Osyths in Essex, was probably born around 1510, entering the monastry at the age of fourteen at the request of his schoolmaster, because he feared to do otherwise. In 1535 he was absolved from his monastic vows, after appealing for Cromwell to secure his release. Five years later he wrote his first and only original work The Lordis Flayle.[3] This highly influential work, consisted of a coherent expression of the main tenets of the Protestant faith, including a denial of transubstantiation and a condemnation of the use of images within the church. Shortly after its publication Solme

1 Henry Brinkelow 'A Supplication to Henry VIII' - Printer unknown 1544

2 Henry Brinkelow 'The coplaint of Roderyck Mors for the redresse of certyn wycked laws' - Geneve in Savoy [really A. Scoloker and W. Seres, London] 1548

3 Thomas Solme - A Treatys called thee Lordis Falyle - J. Emlos Basyl (really Widow C. Ruremundensis, Antwerp) 1540

found himself imprisoned for speaking against the thirty-nine articles, and his book was publically burned as an heretical work. Solme, however, survived imprisonment, and became a popular preacher in the reign of Edward VI. On the death of the King he fled abroad, where he remined until his death, sometime in the early 1550's.

Of course not all of England's early Protestant writers were to suffer at the stake or to die in exile abroad. A number of them like Bale survived persecution and death by having the foresight to leave England at the first sign of danger, only returning again once the political and religious climate had once again become sympathetic to their ideas. In this way, George Joye, Richard Tracy and William Turner all managed to survive both the Henrican and Marian Persecutions, and to take up various ecclesistical offices in both the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I.

George Joye was born at Renhold in Bedforshire in about 1490. He graduated from Cambridge with a B.A. in 1513 and gained an M.A. two years later. In the same year he was ordained, and became a fellow of Peterhouse. In 1527 John Ashwell, the Prior of Newham Abbey, informed the Bishop of Lincoln that Joye was an adherent of the Lutheran theology, and caused Joye to lose his preferment. Joye was summoned to appear with Thomas

Bilney and Thomas Arthur at Westminster. He arrived late and as the proceedings had already begun he declined to enter the hall. Having observed the examination of Bilney and Thomas over a period of four days, and fearing for his life Joye decided to leave for the continent. From his exile in Strasbourg Joye published a lengthy reply to Newham's accusations against him[1]. The work, printed in 1531 was addressed directly to the Prior, whom Joye blamed for his enforced exile.

> "I would right gladly returne and dare not, being exiled into a strange lande amonge rude and boisterous people, with whose maners I cannot wel agre, which is to me no lytell creosse, your letters caused me not onely to forsake my kynne, and fredes, but they slaudered me so grevously that they made them to forsake me and so to hate me that yet I can not come againe into theyr favour, for they abbhored me so sore after yt your secrete

1 George Joye - 'The Letters whyche John JAshwell priour of Newnham Abbey ... sent secretly to the Byshope of Lyncolne ... where in the sayde pryour accuseth George Joye ... wyth the answere of the sayde George unto the same opynyons. Martin de Keyser, Antwerp 1531?

letters had openly defamed me, that they wolde not suffer me to come into their houses, nor speake with me, nor helpe me, but fled from me and loathed me as I had be a kocketrice whiche slaith only with his syght."[1]

Charged as he was with the Lutheran heresy Joye did not dare return to England, and he remained on the Continent, where he made the acquaintance of both Tyndale and Frith. Between 1532 and 1534 Joye and Tyndale worked together preparing an answer to Sir Thomas More. However, the friendship was short lived, coming to an abrupt end in 1534 when they argued over the changes Joye had made in a new edition of the New Testament. The quarrel resulted in Joye printing a letter of apology to Tyndale[2] in 1534. However, despite his apology Tyndale never forgave him for his presumption in independently changing the original translation.

By July of 1535 Joye was lodging with Edward Foxe in Calais. Seeking to secure Joye a safe conduct to return to England Foxe wrote to Cromwell informing him

1 'ibid' Diii^{r}

2 George Joye - <u>An apologue msade by George Joye to satisfye (if it may be) William Tindale</u> 1535

of Joye's desire to return, and of his conformity to the official doctrines of the English church. Joye must have received the guarantee he sought, for towards the end of 1535 he returned to England.

During the seven years he had spent on the continent Joye had translated and printed the book of Isaiah in 1531, the book of Jeremiah, the Song of Moses and the Psalms in 1534. In addition he had helped Tyndale with various editions of the New Testament, and writtten a tract in answer to Thomas More's criticisms of Tyndale's work on the Lords Supper[1].

In 1540, Joye once again fled to the continent, where he remained until the end of Henry's reign. During this time he produced a further ten works, amongst them a translation of Zwinglis 'Declaration of Faith'[2], 'The Defence of the marriage of priests'[3], and 'The

1 George Joye - The subversion of Moris falso foundacion - Jacob Aurik, Emden 1534

2 Huldrych Zwingli (trans G.Joye) 'The rekening and declaration of the faith of H. Zwingli' Widow Ruremund, Atnwerp 1543

3 James Sawtry (G.Joye) The defence of the Mariage of preistes - J. Troost, Auryk 1541

exposicion of Daniel the Prophete'[1]

Joye seems to have remained on the Continent until the accession of Edward VI, when he returned to his native Bedfordshire, dying in 1551.

On the whole Joyes contribution to the Reformation has been largely under-estimated, partly because his works of translation have been greatly overshadowed by the work of Tyndale and Coverdale. Both Joye's theological writings and his biblical translation, gave the ordinary people the means by which they might further come to understand the ideas of the reformation, because of their accessibility to those who lacked theological knowledge. The extent of Joye's influence is witnessed to by his need to leave England at least twice during Henry's reign, in order that he might escape from the fate reserved for heretics.

Richard Tracy first came to the attention of the Thomas Cromwell, when he petitioned him to intervene in a matter concerning his father's will. William Tracey who had died in 1530, had refused to leave anything to

1 George Joye - The exposicion of Daniel the Prophetet gathered oute of Philip Melanchthon, John Ecolampadius - Geneve 1545

the clergy in his will. In 1531 the ecclesiastical courts had pronounced the will to be heretical and the vicar general of the bishop of Worcester had been instructed to exhume the body. Parker in his zeal had ordered the remains to be burnt at the stake. Richard Tracy appealed against the decision, and Cromwell ordered Parker to pay a fine.

Richard Tracy was himself an adherent of the Protestant faith, and in 1529 he was elected to the parliament. By 1535 his works had been condemned as heretical because of their Lutheran sympathies. Despite the publication of his Supplication to Henry VIII[1], Tracy continued to enjoy favour at court until the fall of Cromwell. In 1546, his books were ordered to be burnt. However, with the accession of Edward to the throne, Tracy regained his favour at court, taking a prominent role in the discussions preceding the publication of the Book of Common Prayer. Despite the fact that his religious view brought him to the attention of Queen Mary's council in June 1555, and again in January 1556, Tracy survived to serve as high-sheriff of Gloucestershire between 1560 and 1561. He eventually died in 1569.

1 Richard Tracy - A Supplication to King Henry VIII - M Crom, Antwerp 1544

His most important work A Supplication unto King Henry VIII consisted of a vitriolic attack upon the abuses of the clergy. His hostility towards the clergy was perhaps enhanced by the events surrounding his father's will. Tracy's work was aimed at increasing popular support for the Reformation, by playing on the already existing hostility of the ordinary people towards the clergy.

William Turner, and John Hooper, both started out as strong advocates of the reforming tradition. However, eventually their radical views were to lead them into difficulties, not only with the Roman Catholic authorities, but also with those of the established church of England.

William Turner was a native of Northumberland, who had studied at Pembroke Hall in Cambridge, and had learned Greek under the tutelage of Nicholas Ridley, and become a member of little Germany.

In contrast John Hooper, was the son of a wealthy Somerset family. Initally a member of the Cistercian order, Hooper had been forced to leave the monastery, on its dissolution by Henry VIII. After this he had gone to reside in London, where he soon became attracted to the ideas of Zwingli and Bullinger and was thus converted to the reformed religion.

Foxe records that Hooper was first forced to flee abroad for safety in 1539, when he incurred the wrath of "cetain rabbins in Oxford, who by and by, began to stir coals against him whereby, and especially by the procurement of Dr. Smith he was compelled to void the university."[1] At first he had fled to Paris, and then returned, but only to find himself in such great danger that he was forced to flee immediately, first to Ireland and from thence to France and Switzerland.

Turner left England a year later in 1540, after a short imprisonment in Oxford for preaching without a licence. He went first to Holland and then to Bologna, from whence he graduated M.D.[2] he then continued to travel around Switzerland and Germany as a botanist.

During this time he issued a number of religious books in both English and Latin. Turner returned to England on the accession of Edward, and became both chaplain and physician to the Duke of Somerset.

Hooper spent much of his time abroad in Strasbourg, where he was greatly influenced by the teaching of Zwingli. He too returned to England in 1549, and

1 Foxe 'op cit' Vol VI p 637

2 National biography 'op cit' Vol X p 363

became chaplain to Somerset, and the leader of a small group of radical reformers who advocated an almost puritanical form of religion. "In his sermons" Foxe writes "according to his accustomed manner, he corrected sin, and sharply inveighed against the iniquity of the world, and corupt abuses of the church."[1]

Despite his bitter attacks on the church, Warwick offered Hooper the see of Gloucester in July 1550. At first Hooper refused, because his beliefs would not allow him to take the oath of supremacy. Later that month the King removed the references to saints and angels. Hooper, once again refused to be consecrated, on account of his objections to the wearing of vestments. Again the King issued a special dispensation, allowing Cranmer to consecrate Hooper without vestments, but Cranmer refused to carry out the consecration. In the ensuing controversy Hooper was first commanded not to publish any further works. Ignoring the prohibition, he published a confession of faith, and subsequently found himself imprisoned in the Fleet. Hooper then agreed to wear episcopal dress and was consecrated bishop after the normal order in March of 1551.

1 Foxe 'op cit' Vol VI p 639

At the same time as Hooper was offered the see of Gloucester, the Privy Council directed that Turner should be elected as provost of Oriel College, Oxford. However, as an election had already been made, Turners hopes came to nothing, as did his requests for presidentship over Magdalen College, and for an archdeaconry. Eventually Turner was appointed Dean of Wells, a position which he lost three years later in 1553, when it was returned to its original incumbent, Dean Goodman. On the accession of Mary, Turner once again fled abroad, returning to the protection of Germany and Switzerland.

Hooper took up his position in his diocese immediately after his consecration, and began to take measures to reform the practices of both the clergy and the laity. Hooper is said to have preached four times a day. Foxe gives a detailed description of his work, describing Hooper as 'a light and example'[1] to all clergy.

> "That time that he had to spare from preaching, he bestowed either in hearing public cases, or else in private study, prayer, and visiting of schools. With his continual doctrine he adjoined due and discreet correction, not so much severe to any, as

1 Foxe 'op cit' vol VI p 644

to them which for abundance of riches, and wealthy state, thought they might do what they listed. And doubtless he spared no kind of people, but was indifferent to all men, as well rich as poor, to the great shame of no small number of men now-a-days."[1]

In 1552, Hooper was offered a second diocese, that of Worcester. Here his reforming policies met with strong opposition from the clergy. Two of his canons actually denounced his fifty articles for the reform of the clergy, as illegal.

On the death of Edward VI, Hooper opposed the plan to put Jane Grey on the throne. However, despite his support for Mary as the rightful ruler, Hooper was arrested and imprisoned in the Fleet. This time he had declined to flee because he believed that he was 'called to this place and vocation' and was 'throughly persuded to tarry, and to live and die with my sheep'.

Hooper was brought before Mary's appointed commission in January 1555. The commission, which was composed of the bishops of Winchester, London, Durham, Llandaff and

1 'ibid' Vol VI p 644

2 'ibid' Vol VI p 645

Chichester, found him guilty of heresy, the main charge being that of his Eucharistic opinions. Hooper refused to recant, he was therefore excommunicated, degraded, and handed over to the secular powers.

John Hooper was burnt at Worcester on the 9th February 1554. Foxe records that it took his executioners three attempts to light the fire, and that even then it was so badly done that it took Hooper over three quarters of an hour to die.

William Turner returned to England on the accession of Elizabeth I, and took out a suit against Goodman. The decision went in his favour, and in June 1550 the deanery was restored to him by royal order. Turner continued to expound his radical ideas, opposing all ceremonial observance and challenging episcopal authority. In 1564, his bishop complained of him and he was suspended for non-conformity. After this he took up residence in London, where he remained until his death in July 1568.

Despite their puritanical tendencies the works of Turner and Hooper bear little similarity towards each other. Both Turner's works '<u>The Huntyng and Fyndyng out</u>

of the Romish Fox'[1], and 'The rescuyng of the Romish Fox'[2] are polemical works aimed at highlighting Roman survival within the Church of England. In complete contrast Hooper's works 'A Declaration of Christ and his Offyce'[3], 'A Declaration of the Ten Commandments'[4] and 'An answer unto my Lord of Winchesters book'[5] are well argued theological works. Additionally, Turner seems to have been more concerned with the outward manifestations of worship, whereas Hooper's main purpose in writing was to teach his readers how best to live the Christian life.

Hooper's main contribution to English reformation thought lay within his highly developed sense of Christology, and he was the only early English

1 William Turner - The Huntyng and Fyndying out of the Romish Fox Basyl (really S. Mierdman, Atnwerp) 1543.

2 William Turner - The rescuynge ofthe Romish Fox Hanse Hitprik (really L. Mylius bonn) 1545

3 John Hooper - A Declaration of Christ and his Office' Zurych 1547

4 John Hooper - A Declaration of the Ten Commandments C. Froschaure Zurich 1548

5 John Hooper - An Answere unto my Lord of Winchesters book Zurych A.Fries 1547

reformer who accorded to Christ the three offices of prophet, King and mediator. Furthermore, Hooper's work laid the basis of a form of Protestantism, which was later to develop into puritanism, with its rejection of church ceremonies and outward manifestations of faith, in favour of a pure and spiritual Christian life.

England was not alone in deriving much of her early Protestant literature from the European printing press, as Scotlands earliest reformers also sought refuge abroad. The best known of these, Patrick Hamilton was destined to become Scotland's first Protestant martyr in 1528.

Born of a noble family, Hamilton was the youngest son of Sir Patrick Hamilton of Kincavel, Linlithgowshire. In 1517, he was made titular abbot of the Abbey of Ferne, leaving Scotland in the same year to study first in Paris, and then perhaps later at Louvain. He must have returned to Scotland before the Summer of 1523, as he was incorporated into St. Andrews University on 9 June 1523. Hamilton was probably a member of St. Leonards College, studying under the tutelage of John Major, whose pupils were inclined towards the new learnings. In 1526 Patrick Hamilton began to show his Protestant sympathies, despite the 1525 act of parliament forbidding the importation of books containing the Lutheran errors. The following year

Patrick Hamilton was forced to flee to Wittenberg, along with his fellow reformers Gilbert Wynram and John Hamilton, after a commission of enquiry set up by archbishop Beaton confirmed Hamiltons Lutheran sympathies.

After spending a mere six months abroad, during which time he wrote his 'Common Places'[1], Patrick Hamilton returned to his native land, in order to preach the reformed faith amongst his brethren. This he did with apparent success, for in January 1528 Beaton invited him to attend a conference in St. Andrews. After several meetings Beaton permitted Hamilton to move and preach freely within the University.

However, his unexpected freedom was short lived, for within a month he had been summoned to appear before the Archbishop to answer to thirteen charges of heresy. Hamilton was judged to be a heretic on 29th February 1528, and on the same day was handed over to the secular arm, and duly executed, before any could intervene to save him. An early description of

1 Patrick Hamilton - Dyvers and fruitful gatheringes of Scripture - translated John Frith Antwerp 1532

Hamilton's death is to be found in John Johnson's Comfortable Exhortation of 1535.

Patrick Hamilton's only work is remarkable for its concise expression of the Lutheran faith, and its exposition of the Christian virtues. Setting forward as it does not only a exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith and the relationship between the law, the gospel and grace, but also the biblical teaching in relation to hope, charity and works. Despite, his short life, and the fact that he only managed to write one work before his death, Hamilton was to become an important figure in the Reformation. Protestants in both Scotland and England focused upon him as a true example of the Christian life, whilst his 'Common Places' were translated into English by Frith and widely distributed amongst sympathisers in both countries. The simple style of the work, and Hamilton's constant use of the scriptures, made this an ideal tract by which the ordinary people could come to a greater understanding of the new religion.

1 John Johnston 'A comfortable exhortation of our moste holy Christen faith unto the Christen Bretherne in Scotland - J. Hoochstraten Antwerp 1535.

Of his fellow reformers Johnson and Gau, little is known. Johnson may have been a student at St. Andrews at the same time as Hamilton, and his vivid account of the martyrs death may well be that of an eye witness[1]. Gau too had been a student at the University, although somewhat earlier than either Hamilton or Johnson since he gained his M.A. from St. Andrews in 1511. Gau chose to translate Christian Pedersons work into his native tongue, thus largely excluding it from the English market.2

In conclusion, the reformers who were forced to flee abroad were as varied in background and experience as were the numerous works which they published during their years of exile. Some like John Frith were particularly productive during this time, whilst others, like Patrick Hamilton still managed to make an

1 The subject is dealt with; in great detail by J.Cameron - John Johnsone's An confortable exhortation of our mooste Holy Christen faith and her frutes An early example of Scots Lutheran piety.

2 Christian Pederson 'Den rette wey til hiemmerigis Rige' - Translated by Thomas Gau [The richt way to the Kingdom of hevine] J. Hoochstraten Antwerp 1533.

important contribution to the Reformation cause through just a single work. If little is known about some of the early reformers, and their movements are difficult to trace, then this attests to the danger which surrounded their lives, making secrecy essential to their survival.

This elusiveness also extended to their works, for despite acts of Parliament, and the numerous and determined attempts of the clerical hierarchy to stop their importation, the heretical booktrade continued. The distribuiton of materials was largely dependent upon the good will of the merchants, both to finance their printing and to smuggle them into England as part of their ordinary cargo. Much of the success of this book trade and the spread of Protestant ideals can also be ascribed to the authors themselves. Men who occasionally risked the danger of returning to England to make contact with their agents, or as in the case of Barnes risked their lives on the promise of a safe conduct, in order to further advance the protestant cause at court.

SECTION B

EARLY ENGLISH PROTESTANT THEOLOGY

"I am come hither to be burned as a heretic, and you shall hear my belief, whereby you shall perceive what erroneous opinions I hold. God I take to record. I never (to my knowledge) taught any erroneous doctrine, but only those things which scripture led me unto ... I believe that through his death he overcame sin, death and hell; and that there is none other satisfaction unto the father, but this his death and passion only; and that no work of man did deserve anything of God."[1]

Robert Barnes was found guilty of heresy in 1540. He was burnt with two others at Smithfield on June 30. His last confession of faith reasserted his belief that men were justified by faith alone, devoid of any means to help win their salvation. In this he spoke not only for himself but also for his fellow reformers. This applies equally to those who expressed their ideas in the form of vitriolic anti-clericalism, as it does to those who supported their views with a coherent theological argument. When the former gave vocal expression to their discontent concerning clerical abuses, they were doing much more than simply attacking a wealthy clergy who presided over a corrupt church.

1 Protestation of Barnes at the stake - Foxe Actes and Monuments V p 434

Their discontent stemmed directly from the most central concept of the Reformation, that of justification by faith alone.

This Pauline concept was central to the development of the Protestant tradition, both in thought and actuality, forming as it did the basis of Protestant identity and unification. Justification became the cornerstone which gave impetus to all other beliefs and reforms.

Some of the English reformers initially chose to concentrate, on defining the relationship between the spiritual and the temporal powers, in a bid to attract the support of Henry VIII for the reforming cause. Others chose to concentrate on the more obvious clerical abuses. However, all these were of secondary consideration. Primarily the concern of men like Tyndale, Frith, Fish and Hooper remained one of soteriology.

Justification then was an essential component of reform. However, this concept was not so strictly defined as to discount the emergence of varying interpretations as to its meaning. For some justification was a once and for all event, whilst for others it represented the continuing process of

renewal, by which God cancelled out man's debt on account of Christ's sacrificial death.

The ability of a prominent reformer such as Robert Barnes[1] to change his understanding, of the process of justification, without losing any of his support, is a prime example of the uncertainty attached to the true definition of justification. For whilst in 1531 Barnes was insistent that justification was by faith alone, just three years later in 1534[2] he was according good works an important role in the process of a mans justification before his fellow men. Thus Barnes, whilst remaining a Protestant, expounded a dual form of justification by faith before God, and by works before men. In this way the letter of Barnes which he had repudiated in 1531, became acceptable in 1534, because he had discovered a means by which to reconcile the role of faith and works, in the overall process of justification.

However, despite these problems of interpretation, justification by faith alone remained central to the

1 Robert Barnes - A supplication unto Henry VIII S Cock? Antwerp 1531.

2 Robert Barnes - A Supplication unto Henry VIII London - J Byddell 1534.

reformation cause. For, whereas differences of opinion also existed over other issues, for example the sacraments, the divisions in these areas had not yet hardened, to the point where they would totally exclude all hope of reconciliation. This however, cannot be said as far as justification was concerned. The reformers were unanimous in their rejection of good works as a contributory factor in man's salvation, and were as unwilling to compromise upon this point as were their catholic protagonists.

Because of its radical nature the doctrine of justification re-shaped Christian belief and practice to a point where it was unrecognisable to the established church. By making God solely and wholly responsible for the individual man's salvation, justification deprived the church of its privileged position as the one mediator between God and man. It's external consequence was to abolish the need for many of the church's functions, and hence of its privileged position in society.

I FAITH

Just what the reformers understood by the term justification by faith was dependent upon the very definition of the word faith itself. The concept was interpreted with some degree of flexibility Its origins were open to debate, and its function sufficiently ambiguous to allow the reformers to apply it to their own understanding of the process of justification.

Whilst the concept had been clearly defined by Luther, Zwingli and Bucer, the English reformers seem to indicate no clear uniform preference for any of these continental reformers. Of all the early Reformation writings, only the brief work 'Patricks places' seems to present a faithful rendition of the Lutheran definition of faith, the writings of the other reformers vacillating between the ideas of the three, or for preference combining Bucer and Zwingli's usage of faith as a confident conviction of Gods saving grace, along with Luthers understanding of faith, as the individuals realisation of Gods actuality through the death of Christ. All are agreed, with the exception of Frith, and after 1534 Robert Barnes, that justification is accomplished by faith alone. Frith and Barnes alone choose to allocate a special place to

exterior works, perhaps in an attempt to make their doctrines more palatable to those in power.

Patrick Hamilton gives a succinct summary of Luther's understanding of faith, in his Places[1]. Here faith is seen as being concerned with that which is not visible, namely a belief in God. Through the presence of faith man comprehends the reality of Gods living presence. Faith is the means by which the invisible and transcendent, becomes a visible and imminent presence in mans soul.

In comparison, George Joye, in his introduction to The letters of John Ashwell[2], sees faith as having a dual purpose. Faith whilst making a man aware of the reality of Gods living presence, serves the joint purpose of reassuring the individual that through Christs sacrificial death God has done all that is necessary for his reconciliation to mankind. Thus Joye combines the awareness of Luthers faith with the

1 Patrick Hamilton - Dyvers fruitful gatheringes of scripture trans J Frith Antwerp 1532.

2 George Joye - The letters which John Ashwell, Priour of Newnham Abbey, beside Bedforde sente secretely to the Bishope of Lyncolne M de Keyser Antwerp 1531.

unerring certainty of Bucers interpretation of Gods saving grace.

> "Fayth is an infallible and undoubted cetaintye in our harts whereby we believe and trust in the invysible God, and to open thy definition yet more playnely faith is that same constante persuasion in our hartes assured us by the holy goost certifyenge us of the goodness of God and of hys promises towarde us, by the which persuasion we beleve verely his wozed and are assured in our harts (the holy goost testifyeng it in us) that he is oure god, oure Father to us an almighty helper and delyverer, and that we are recyved into hys favour by death and merites of hys Sonne Jesus Christ our Savyour".[1]

Faith which had, prior to this time, been both desirable, and within the reach of man, partly through his own endeavours, now became the freely given and perfect gift of God. Salvation which to the ordinary man was sometimes thought to be an earthly certainty, through ceremonies, good works and prayer, now became dependent upon the all sufficient atoning death of Christ. Neither the merits of the Saints, the penance of the individual, nor the good works of man could hasten the advent of faith within

1 George Joye 'Ibid' Bii V

the individual soul. Thus man was rendered totally helpless in the quest for salvation. Additionally, there could be no guarantee of when God would confer faith, if indeed he was to confer it at all. Experience taught the reformers that God's gift of faith did not necessarily coincide with a mans desire to be granted this faith. When God did choose to confer faith, he could either do so immediately, or on the other hand, gradually draw a man to faith over a period of time when the time was right.

In an attempt to explain the absence of perfect faith from the soul of mankind, Hooper[1] turned to the legalism of the Old Testament with its concept of perfect obedience to God's law. He was in no doubt that it was man's inability to obey these laws to the point of perfection which prevented him from truly believing in God, unless the infirmity of man's nature was first removed by Christ.

> "Everyman is called in scripture wicked, and thenime of God, for the privaiton and lacke of faithe, an love, that he owithe unto God... that is to say they are callid wickid that in all

1 John Hooper - <u>A declaration of Chryst and of his office</u> Zurych 1547.

thinges honourithe not God, belivethe not in God, and that observithe not his commaundements as they shuld do, whiche we cannot do by reason of this naturall infirmite, oz hatred of the fleshe against God"[1].

Hooper maintains that the righteous demands of Gods law can only be transcended by faith, when this faith is held through Christ. For then faith which was tainted by the weakness of Mans nature becomes perfect in Christ. This presupposes that faith is already present within the soul and that Gods gift is an awakening and perfecting of an already present faith, and not the conferring of faith as an alien part of the soul.

Christiern Pederson[2] agrees that the Old Testament laws have a part to play in mans realisation of the reality of God through faith. But for him the Old Testament points the way to salvation, by making man acutely aware of his failings and unworthiness before God.

1 John Hooper - A declaration of the Ten Commandments - C Froschaure Zurich 1548 pg AVii^{r}.

2 Christiern Pedersen - The richt vay to the kingdome of hevine is techit heir Trans T Gau, Malmw J Hoochstraten 1533.

"Sua the X commadis of god lernis al me to know their spiritual seiknes Sua yat everie man ma se and know be himeseif quhat he may du or tat be one dune and thair of know yat he is sinful and evil. Befor god for causz he cannoth fulfil his commandis na keip hime self frae sine. Secudlie faith leris al man quhair thay sal seik and find help and teching of their spiritual seikness, yat is to say quhair thay sal get grace"[1].

The law of the Old Testament causes a man to acknowledge his need for forgiveness. Only in this state of total unknowing and helplessness can man embark on the path to true faith. It is at this point that Pedersen believed faith declares to the individual God's mercy through Christ. Again the beliefs of the established Church were accorded no place in mans salvation, rather they were condemned because they led men away from the true starting point of faith. Namely, the renunciation of their own ability to add to Gods already perfect salvific act.

By discounting the soteriological teaching of the church, the reformers created a void, which they then sought to fill with a more reliable guide to faith.

Christiern Pederson 'ibid' Av[v]

For although faith was held to be concerned with the invisible, it was also held to be accessible to man through the dual means of the Holy Spirit and God's word. The two worked together in complementary unison to prepare the individual for the receipt of faith.

> "The Christian man hath no refuge nor helps to resyst synne, but onely by Godes word as our Saviour Christ did, when he must fyxe a sure and constāt faythe. faythe causet us and all ours to be acceptable in ye syght of god. For a conclusion, what so ever is not of fayth that same is synne. And withouwte a constante and sure faythe, it is impossyble to please god"[1]

Faith and the word of God were inextricably bound together, as essential components in reformation soteriology. The word of God itself, was re-orientated to centre upon the person of Christ, to whom the Old Testament pointed and in whom God's promise was fulfilled. God's word at one and the same time both condemned and justified a man, bringing him first to a state of despair and then pointing to his only hope of salvation the death of Christ. Hence, God's word in

1 Richard Tracy - A supplication to Kynge Henry VIII Aiv^{v} Antwerp 1544.

conjunction with the Holy Spirit, both leads a man to faith and assures him of forgiveness. The workings of the law, and the workings of faith are placed in opposite spheres, and whilst the latter always points to forgiveness and life, the former always points to judgement and death, providing the perfect foil against which to offset the merits of true faith.

Faith then is the fundamental conviction that God has already completed everything which is necessary for the forgiveness of mankind. As such its qualities are invisible and spiritual, a certainty in the heart, and a shift from the acknowledgement of God's existence, to an absolute awareness of his living presence in the soul. Christocentric by nature, faith transcends the law as the spontaneous gift of God, by which man is forgiven and restored anew to a state of grace.

According to Tyndale the Spirit, is an ever present part of mans soul which is awakened upon the preaching of God's word. It alone is responsible for evoking in each individual the correct response, to God's gift of salvation.

> "And the spirite cometh by fayth only even so fayth cometh by hearynge the word of glad tydyngs of God, when Christ is preached, how that he is God and sonne and man, also deede and rysen agayn

for oure sakes, as he sayeth in the third, fourth and tenth chapter. All oure iustifying then commeth of fayth and fayth and the spirit come of God, not of us"[1]

Tyndale follows Luther in the belief that faith functions beyond man's rationality, for the individual to reject faith is as unthinkable as his ability to invoke it. The Spirit causes faith, and the spirit directs the individual along the correct path.

This insistence on man's inability to reject faith once proffered, appears to imply a limitation of man's free will. That same free will that originally led him into sin is denied to him when it comes to his salvation. The eternal presence of the Spirit in mans soul and its awakening of faith at the correct time, seems to imply that God has already pre-determined the individuals salvation from the moment of birth. This early form of Protestant predestination places further limitation on the ability of man to realise salvation. It creates a form of soteriology which is exclusive rather than

1 William Tyndale. - <u>A Compendious Introduction, Prologe or Preface unto the Pistle of Paul to the Romayns</u> Worms. P. Schoeffer 1526 p Av^{r}

inclusive. Instead of opening the way to salvation for everyone, it excludes the majority depriving them of access to Gods grace.

In comparison the Roman Catholic Church made the path to eternal life much easier, for whilst acknowledging mans weakness and infirmity it provided a ready means of access to Gods forgiving grace. If Man could not earn his salvation wholly alone, he could contribute to his forgiveness by his own good works and prayers of supplication to the saints. Of course this belief system was open to abuse, as the German indulgences controversy all too readily proved, for the ordinary people relied on self achievement at the expense of faith. When the Protestant reformers rejected this belief system in its entirety, they removed salvation from the realms of reasonable certainty into the realms of total uncertainty, making salvation dependent on the benign activity of what to the sixteenth century man was a transcendent power.

The Protestant doctrine too was open to abuse, for if a mans salvation owed nothing to his good deeds, then what incentive was there to choose good and refrain from evil. The social implications of such a doctrine, were clearly evident to those in power. This dilemma may at least in part account for the changes Robert Barnes made in his 1534 version of the '<u>Supplication to</u>

Henry VIII', likewise John Frith, always the pragmatist, who was willing to permit limited compromise, if by such an action he could forward the cause of reform, whilst still retaining the true nature of its core beliefs.

Justification by faith alone must have proved a difficult issue for him, since to allow that good works could contribute to mans salvation, even in the smallest part, would have resulted in a denial of the very essence of the reformed tradition. In the end the best compromise he could reach was one which permitted justification by both faith and works. However, the two types of justification operated in very different spheres.

> "Fayth is a gift of God, which he distributeth at hys own pleasure [1 Cor XII]. If he gyve it not this daye, he may gyve it tomorrow. And if thou perceavest by an exterior worke that thy neyghboure have it not, instruct him with Gods worde, and pray God to gyve hym grace to beleave"[1].

By advocating this twofold form of justification whereby

1 John Frith - Disputacion of Purgatory Antwerp 1531 p IV^{V}

the individual is justified by faith before God and by works before man, Frith helped to allay the fears of the temporal powers. He managed to show that the Protestant religion still held the necessity for an ethical code of conduct, whilst at the same time faithfully retaining the radical nature of Protestant soteriology.

Additionally, English and Continental reformers alike, saw faith as something more than merely etherial. If faith resulted in the spiritual re-orientation of a man's soul, it was also made manifest in the practical re-orientation of a mans life. Through faith, which is God's gift of love, God and man are reconciled. Similarly this faith when translated into earthly terms is expressed in a re-orientation of the individuals attitude towards his neighbour. The love of a justified man for his God is made visibly manifest through his love to others. Hence a man is justified before his fellow men by his works, and whilst the identity of those who are justified remains a mystery to all but God alone, man is at least given some indication of his neighbour's state of grace.

> "Rightewesnes is even soche fayth, and is called Godes rightewesnes, or rightwesnes that is of valoure before God. For it is Gods giffte and it altereth a man and haungeth hym into a new

spirituall nature and maketh hym fre and liberall to paye every man his dutie"[1].

English reformers such as, Frith, Fish, Hooper, Tyndale, Solme, Barnes and Brinkelow, all laid great emphasis on the individuals obligations to fulfil his Christian duty. When a man was released from death by Gods grace this new found freedom was accompanied by a new responsibility to observe his Christian duty. According to George Joye it is upon this "belyve and assured persuasion we love him so earnestly agayne that we cease not to fulfyll his pleasures in doyng the workes of love or charite to owre neighbours"[2]

It is upon this basis that some of the English reformers based their anti-clerical works. For example; Simon Fish[3] could condemn the clergy because they failed to live according to Christian ideals. Often when viewed out of context these particular

1 William Tyndale - Pistle of Paul to the Romayns 'op cit' Avii^{r}.

2 George Joye - 'op cit' Letters of John Ashwell Bii^{v}.

3 Simon Fish - A supplication for the Beggars. Antwerp 1529.

reforming tracts seem to be little more than characteristically Lollard attacks on the abuses of clerical life. Set in context they have a much deeper basis, for their real underlying concern, springs from the doctrine of justification. Often strongly polemical these tracts provided a better way of communicating the message of the Reformation to the ordinary people, who initially found it easier to relate to practicalities rather than ideology.

Faith these reformers taught was revealed through a threefold love. That of God for man, and in return of the redeemed man for God. And finally of the individual for his fellow men. Thus to all who had received faith, God had given the additional responsibility of caring for their fellow man, whilst setting an example by their new found life style.

II Justification

Given that by faith the reformers understood the conviction, that through his death Christ had reconciled man to God, it is clear that this re-discovery of true faith, must have had extensive repercussions on their understanding of the relationship between God and man. For through faith the two were held to be reconciled, although man still remained unable to obey God's laws in their entirety and thus God's righteousness expressed through the law remained unsatisfied.

The English reformers closely followed their continental counterparts making the traditional teaching on the fall their own. The inherited sin of Adam was seen as destroying mans dependent relationship with God, subjecting man to the powers of Satan, and alienating him from the Father.

John Bale closely follows the teaching of Luther, when he portrays fallen man, as incapable of avoiding sin. His work, A Tragedy or enterlude manyfesting the chere promyse of God unto man[1], is written in a dialogue

1 John Bale - A Tragedy or enterlude manyfesting the chere promyse of God unto man - D. van der Straten, Wesel 1547

form, between God and the major figures of the Old Testament. Bale emphasises the continuity between the two Testaments, linking Christ the new Adam with the First man.

Adam who represents mankind created in Gods own image pleads for mercy. Bale holds that once man had fallen from grace, his ability to reason was impaired, and thus he was rendered incapable of doing that which was righteous before God.

> "Adam primus homo - 'Avoyde it I cannot, thou layest it to me so harde. Lorde, now I perceyve what power is in man. And strengthe of hymselfe, whan thy swete grace is absent. He must nedes but Fall, do he the best he can. And daunger hymselfe as apereth evydent For I synned not so longe as thou wert present, But whan thou wert gone. I fell to synne by and by and the dyspleased"[1]

This belief that man in his fallen state is incapable of fulfilling God's righteous requirements is central to the belief of justification. As is the belief in the eternal presence of the Spirit, as opposed to the

1 John Bale 'ibid' Avii[v]

idea that the spirit was only conferred on man, at the moment of his justification. As the third member of the Trinity, the spirit is held to be eternal and ever working for the salvation of mankind. Thus the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is maintained, each fulfilling a well defined role in mans relationship with the divinity.

The spirit ever present in mankind, is allocated the task of evoking in man, a correct response to God. this it does through divine love, causing man to do spontaneously that which is acceptable to God. The spirit which was present in the first Adam is seen as subdued in the carnal man after the fall, only to be reawakened by the new Adam, Jesus Christ.

Bale, in common with a majority of the early reformers, acepted this view of the fall as the causal event severing the relationship betweeen God and man. Once man had fallen from grace, the Spirit although present was no longer operative in man's soul. Consequently man's fall from grace distorted his view of God and God's law, leaving him incapable to resist sin. The uncompromising sentence that Bale's God pronounces on Adam, clearly shows the writers overwhelming desire to emphasise the immutable sovereignity and righteousness of God. Hooper too firmly identifies this as the grounds of mans present estrangement

"Adam thonly occasion of all mannes misere was deryvid into all his posterite and made subject unto deathe and theire of God for ever"[1]

There is no questioning of God's freedom to condemn or to forgive. God alone is accorded the freedom to do as he will whilst still maintaining his righteousness. Since man by his disobedience had sacrificed both his freedom and the aid of the spirit he was made totally dependent on God's mercy to renew the channel of grace, which evoked from Man the response of grace.

Like their continental counterparts the English reformers also relied heavily on the Pauline Epistles, to give both authority and antiquity to their beliefs, and to further emphasize their doctrinal unity with the leaders of the early church. Romans chapters 1-8 occupies a prominent position in the work of all those who speak of justification by faith alone. Frith, Fish, Tyndale and Hooper further mirror the ideas of Luther by drawing a comparison between the old and the new covenant.

1 John Hooper - A declaration of Christ 'op cit' Aiv^{r}

"Also how that withoute our merits we be justified to thintent that we shuld not put oure trust in workes as did the Jews"[1]

To this end the entire Bible was held to bear witness to the saving act of Christ. Old and New Testaments alike are given a Christocentric emphasis, and Christ's incarnation is seen as the one event in which the covenant finds completion. Christ and Adam are inextricably linked in God's eternal plan for the salvation of mankind, for promises made in the Old Testament only reach fulfillment in the incarnation and death of God's son.

Peter Coelestis to Adam

"cleave to thy promysse, with all thy inwarde powre, fyrmelye enclose it in thy rememberaunce fast. Folde it in thy faythe, with full hope day and houre, And thy salvacyon it will be the last. the sede shall clere the of all thy wyckednesse past, And procure thy peace, with most hygh grace

1 Simon Fish - The Sum of Holye Scripture, and the ordeynarye of Christen Teaching. [Translated from the Dutch work] Antwerp 1529 Aii^{r}

in my syght, Se thu trust to it and hold not the matter lyght".[1]

The Jews had placed their trust in works and in the total fulfillment of the law. However, the law had only shown mankind their sin and prepared them for the revelation of the new covenant in Christ. The law taught men that their merits availed them nothing, because such perfect obedience was totally beyond their capability. The belief that only God's grace freely given could grant freedom and salvation, became a central tenet of the faith. This demanded a total reliance upon Gods mercy, for it was only by the abandonment of self achievement that a man was enabled to become a recipient of this grace.

Consequently the beliefs and practices of the established church were totally rejected. Baptismal water was no longer held to take away sin by its own merits, nor the remaining sacraments to act 'ex opere operato'. If this were not so then the people would be baptised, or receive the elements on a daily basis to ensure their salvation. This rejection of the Church's mediatory role individualised mans salvation, and left the individual fully dependent upon God's promise of

1 John Bale - 'op cit' Aviii^{r}

forgiveness. The only comfort which could be offered in this situation was to be found in the ample past evidence which proved that God had fulfilled his promises in the past.

God's promise is seen as reaching its fulfillment in the incarnation of Christ, whom Simon Fish informs his readers was born because 'we could not help oursilves'[1]. He goes on to adopt the traditional understanding of the atonement, as does Barnes, Frith, Hooper, Hamilton and Tyndale. They readily accept the necessity of the two natures of Christ. For if the broken relationship between God and man was to be perfectly restored, it was essential that the mediator between the two was both God and man, that he might reform that vital link broken by the first sin of Adam.

> "Here have you Christ and his very nature fulie and holie, and he that denyethe any thinge, or any parte of these thinges or take any of them and aplye them or geve the glorye of them to any other person than to Christ only, the same man robythe Christ of his honour, and denieth Christe and is

1 Simon Fish - Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Biii^{r}

very anti-Christ"[1]

These reformers are careful to emphasize the importance of the dual nature of Christ, and to achieve the correct balance, between affording Christ true humanity, whilst at the same time safeguarding his divine sovereignty. Christ shared not only the physical nature of man but also the attributes of mans soul. He too was of necessity subjected to the same temptations and emotions of mankind, and it was in his power to resist the abasement of sin that he was able to communicate his merits to mankind. Through the incarnation of his son God made man's approach to the divine possible again, and also fulfilled the promises of the covenant.

> "God the maker of heven and erthe ys not alonly a father, but also my father yee and that throw the favour that Christ hathe purchesid me, fro the which favour, neyther hevyn nor erthe tribulacion nor persecution, dethe nor helle can devyde me"[1]

1 Robert Barnes - Supplication 1531 'op cit' F6^{V}

2 Robert Barnes 'ibid' F8^{V}

As a consequence of his love for mankind God has redeemed his children from the devil to whom they rightly belonged, and has restored them to their rightful place as inheritors of his kingdom. It was for this purpose that Christ became poor in order that man might be made rich.

Christ's death then in some way made satisfaction for the sins of mankind. Simon Fish envisages the sacrificial death of Christ as bringing about a twofold satisfaction. That is sufficient to pay the debt owed to the devil, and also the satisfaction demanded by God to atone for mankinds sin. Christ's death both initiated a fight between him and the devil and at the same time fulfilled the righteous demands of God. As a consequence of his defeat the devil lost all right and claim to the souls of mankind.

> "For Jesus Christ has by his death foughte ageynste the devell, hath vayngusshed the edevell, and deth, and hath taken away all theyre ryght they had over us"[1]

1 Simon Fish - Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Aviii^{r}

There is no suggestion that Christ in some way tricked the devil, but rather that he overcame him, and forced him to relinquish his claims over mankind. By his total obedience to God's will, Christ is held to have accomplished two things. These are symbolised by the fountain of water and blood which flowed from Christ's side. Firstly; "he has bought us ad made us fre from the devill and from oure sinnes"[1]. The implication here being that Christ by his undeserved death, paid a debt to the devil to secure the release of men's souls which rightfully belonged to him. Additionally Fish holds that Christ has purified and cleansed mankind, in order that man might become an acceptable offering to his Father.

> "And for bicause the devell did set his hande upon Christ to whom he had no right he hath lost all his right which he had over us. And so are we delyvered from the servicude and subjection of the devell and belong to Christ"[2]

At the same time the author of this work, closely follows the Anselmian doctrine of the atonement. Relying heavily on Paul's letter to the Ephesians he writes

1 Simon Fish 'ibid' Biii^{r}

2 Simon Fish 'ibid' Civ^{r}

> "Then Christ is made a mediator bytwene god and man and has offered himselfe an oblacion for us to his Father, whereby he hath reconciled us agayn and made oure peace"[1]

The early reformers, without exception accepted the Anselmian theology of the atonement as set down in the Cur Deus Homo. They were as content to base their own beliefs upon the concepts of a medieval and feudal society as Anselm had done centuries previously. Here in the traditional manner, God the righteous Lord and Creator is seen as demanding satisfaction for the sins of mankind. Man in a state of constant indebtedness to God was still held as unable to make good this debt, and thus the estrangement from God continued throughout the ages. Hence the need for God to intervene on mans part. Only Christ, whose death was undeserved could fulfil the righteous requirements of God and open the way for the two to be reconciled.

> "It was nedefull then that he that should satisfie for us shuld be without sinne without subjection or obligation ... The this one thing was of

1 Simon Fish 'ibid' Civ[r]

> necessite that other we must abide lost for ever or it behoved that God shuld be made man"[1]

It was, therefore, necessary for God to become man, combining in Christ the human and the divine, that the temptation of sin might be overcome and man ransomed from the devil. By his sinless death Christ became the righteous mediator between God and man. Acceptable to God through his perfect obedience, open to mankind through his human nature.

> "Now sith he hath payed thy debte thou dedest not, no thou canst not, but shuldest be dapned if his bloude were not. But sith he was punished for the, the shall not be punished. Finallye he hath delyvered ye fren thy condepnaciō and all evell, and desyreth nought of the but yt thou wilt acknowledge what he hath done for ye"[2]

All those who had faith in God's promises were held to be assured of God's forgiveness. Because Christ took upon himself the frailty of human nature, he is now able to give to all those who have faith, the right to become the children of God, and inheritors of God's

1 Simon Fish 'ibid' Civ^{r}

2 Patrick Hamilton 'op cit' Bvii^{r}

glory. The doctrine is not original but that of the established church. It is however, acceptable to the early reformers, not because of its antiquity but because they can locate its origins in the scriptures, particularly in relation to Pauls letter to the Romans.

How then are we to understand this dual nature and atoning death of Christ? Hooper who was eager to maintain both the full humanity of Christ, without diminishing the sovereignty of his divinity, wrote:

> "The devyne nature of Christ was not rent, nor tarn, nor kylled. But it obeyed the will of the Father. It gave place to the displeasure and Ire of God, that the body of Christ might dye being all wayes equal with the Father, he could if he had executed his divine powe delyverid his body from the tyranny of the lawe"[1]

By doing so he ensures that it is understood that although Christ took on the nature of man, and became subject to the law to the point of death, he did so on a voluntary basis. Christ actively permitted the law to have dominion over him. If he had so desired he

1 John Hooper - <u>A declaration of Christ</u> 'op cit' Av^{v}

could have used his powers as the Son of God to escape the sentence of the law. However, Hooper envisaged God as a transcendent power, totally incomprehensible and inaccessible to mankind. He acknowledged that the only way in which man might gain access to God, is for God to allow some part of his divinity to descend to the level of mankind.

This does not mean that he believed that God's divinity itself was abased or diminished by the incarnation, nor that Christ's humanity was any less than the rest of mankind. Thus he sought to define the delicate balance between the two natures of Christ, and at the same time to safeguard against accusation of Docetist or Gnostic heresy. In Christ the two natures, human and divine came together, and whilst the latter permeated the former it still retained its independence from the human side of Christ's nature. Hence Hooper explains that it was the human and not the divine nature of Christ which was broken on the cross.

Thus Hooper stands apart from the ideas of Luther, in that the latter places more emphasis on the unity of the two natures of Christ. In contrast Frith upheld the ubiquity of Christ both in his humanity and his divinity.

"Who can by right be called a mid-dealer betewne God and man, but he that is both God and man? Therefore since we have soche a mid-dealer, whyche in al poyntes hath proved our infirmitie savynge onlye synne which is exalted above the hevens, and siteth on the ryght honde of God, and hath in al thynges obteyned the next power unto hym, on whos empyre al good thynges depend"[1]

It is the whole of Christ that submits to death in order that he might become the one mediator between God and man. Of this process the author of the Sum of Holye Scripture writes "This hath God gyven us without owre deservyng and we nede not to laboure for these thinges. For we have all this already. As witnessith Saynt John saying "Behold whate love the father hath shewed on us tht we shuld be called the children of God" (Jh 1)"[2]

One of the most serious criticisms the reformers levelled against the established Church, was that

1 John Frith - A Judgement on Master William Traceys Testimony Widow Endhoven Antwerp 1531 Ciii^{r}

2 Simon Fish - Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Div^{r}

through its emphasis on good works and the mediation of the saints, it deprived God of his true glory and belittled his sovereignty as the omnipotent power in which all things had their origin.

This emphasis on the sovereignty of God also created problems. For if God was wholly responsible for man's salvation, what part did Christ's death have to play in the process of justification. If they claimed that through his death Christ forced God to confer his merits upon mankind, they immediately limited God's sovereignty. Their response to this problem is typified in the work of William Tyndale, who re-orientated the act of justification to give it a theocentricity which assigned to God the position of the divine initiator of the entire process of man's salvation.

> Note now the order: First god giveth me light to see the goodnesse and righteousnesse of the law, and myne own synne and unrightousnesse, out of whiche knowledge spryngeth repentaunce. Now repentaunce teacheth me, not that the law is good and I evill, but a light that the spirite of God hathe me given, out of which light repentaunce

springeth"[1]

Thus by involving God in all of the events directed towards man's salvation, Tyndale emphasized the centrality of God's grace. Justification was believed to be the result of divine causality. God had made mans forgiveness possible because he desired it. He alone had directed every aspect of the work of Christ towards the salvation of mankind.

On these two premises there is no real conflict between the reformers and the established Church. The Roman Catholic theologians would have held no objections to the reformers insistence on the dual nature of Christ, or the need to safeguard the sovereignty of God. However they interpereted the latter differently, according a man's good works a place in his salvation, as they did not hold this to be an infringement on God's sovereignty. The real grounds of the disagreement were rooted in the personalisation of man's relationship with God.

1 William Tyndale - Answere to Thomas More - Foxe collected works of Tyndale, Frith and Barnes Pvii[r]

"He will not impute my synnes unto me. Though they be never so great, so longe as I hange on the blessyed bloud of Christe Jesus, he is also a lyberalle Father, yea and that unto me lyberalle, whiche will not alonly promyse me al thynges but also geve them me whether they be necessary to the body or to the soule. He ys also not only lyberalle but myghty to perform all thynges that he promyseth unto me"[1]

The doctrine of justification by faith formed the basis for the attack upon the more practical expressions of Christian belief within the established Church. Thus the spiritual basis of the new faith was translated into the temporal world of men. Hence, the elements of the mass had no soteriological significance except in the act of remembrance, neither had confession to a priest, or the ensuing pronouncement of absolution. God alone was allocated the power to forgive the individuals sins, and he alone knew when these sins had received such divine absolution. Even then it was held that the justified man still remained in sin, the difference between them and the damned was that God had chosen to grant them forgiveness, on the grounds of their faith.

1 Robert Barnes - Supplication 1531 'op cit' F8^{V}

In his belief that man is both righteous and sinful at the same time. Barnes has been strongly influenced by Luther, and through him by the ideas of Augustine. At the time of mans justification, and in his life which follows, Barnes holds that there are two opposites at work within him. His sinful nature still remains but at the same time the consequences of his sin are removed, because God imputes the merits of Christ's sacrificial death, to the justified man. In this he is supported by Hooper.

> "They (sins) are translated into Christ. Not so that we shuld be clene delivered from them, as thoughe they were dead in our nature, or owre nature chāgid or shuld not provoke us oni more to ile but that they shuld not damne us, bicause Christ satisfied for the in his awne bodie"[1]

Since this act of salvation was no longer held to be dependent upon the sacraments of the Church, the threat of excommunication could no longer be used to enforce uniformity on those who wandered from the path of obedience. The early Protestants still faced persecution, imprisonment and the threat of death for

1 John Hooper - A declaration of the Ten Commandments. Avii^{r}

those who refused to recant, or having done so later relapsed into their heretical ways. However, the threat of damnation for those who died outwith the brotherhood of the established Church, no longer acted as a deterent to dissent. The early Protestants denied that the earthly sentence of excommunication had any validity in the eyes of God. Further, they saw the death of an excommunicated martyr as far worthier of reward, than the life of one who recanted and betrayed the true Christian Faith.

Those writers who remained in exile, sought to encourage their brethren in England to stand fast in their beliefs, by assurances of Gods forgiveness,and promises of spiritual reward. The 'Sum of Holye Scripture' is one such example. By belittling the status of death and portraying it as nothing more than the final stage of the Christian's early battle, it seeks to reassure its readers that God will fulfil his promise.

> " But as long as we live here we must lerne all to dye. For we shall not repute this life that we have here for a life"[1]

1 Simon Fish - The Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Bi[r]

In the face of uncertainty where Christians, and non-Christians alike must die without any visible proof of their salvation, there was a need to reassure them that their contacts with the world were secondary, to the obedience they owed to God. The author of the 'Sum of Holye Scripture' made disobedience to the spiritual powers a virtue, believing that it was necessary to reject the decrees of both the Popes and the Councils. Thus he advocated the rejection of the two final doctrinal authorities, alongside the teachings of the devil.

> "Yelde us unto him, promysing that we will serve him and denye the devell, and all his temptacion, Pope, and counsel, and that we will serve Christ crucified for us and upon this promyse revcyve we oure name, and God have write us as in a rolle for his champyons and servauntes, an so we be made propre to God, for he is oure father and we be his children"[1].

Although the Christian lived in the world, and was required to pay due obedience to the temporal powers, the reformers saw this state as merely transitory, and involvement in the world as insignificant when compared

1 Simon Fish 'ibid' Biv^{r}

with God's gift of grace. Their absolute certainty that salvation lay totally beyond the realm of earthly concerns, meant that they developed a theology which left Christians divorced from the world, whilst at the same time taking an active role in their respective communities.

At a time when many were seen to be suffering for their faith, the reformers saw a very real need to reassure them of God's forgiveness. There were no visible signs that a man had been justified, but there was equally no burden upon the individual to partially satisfy God by his deeds within the world. Salvation was given a new dynamic force, by its immediacy and totality from the moment of justification.

III FAITH AND THE LAW

If justification was by faith alone, then it would seem that the Old Testament with its emphasis on the need for obedience to God's law, had been superseded! and rendered invalid in the wake of Christ's saving act. Acutely aware of this anomaly, the reformers chose to allocate the law a new but essential function in the process of man's salvation. In so doing they closely followed the ideas of the continental reformers, and far from making the law obsolete, they held that it was still an essential part of salvation, as it was the joint work of both the law and the spirit which was efficacious in bringing man to a state of grace.

Hooper held the law to be part of the continual process of that salvation which God had promised to Adam, and envisaged it as continuing throughout the ages, eventually receiving its fulfillment in Christ.

> "All these promises, and other that apperteynid unto the salvation of Adame and his prosteritie were made in Christ, and for Christe onlye,and appertainid unto our father, and us, as we appertainid unto Christ, he is the dore, the waie and the liffe. Joan 10. He onlie is the

mediatour betwene God and man without whom no man can com to the fader celestiall. So by the collation of Adame and Christ, synne and grace, thus interpretate Godes promises"[1]

The purpose of the law is twofold firstly; it declares God's righteousness to mankind, and marks out the path of righteousness, and secondly; it declares to man his true state, and prepares the way for the preaching of the gospel and the work of the spirit. Thus, although estranged man is incapable of fulfilling God's law, it is the law itself which is the first step in re-establishing a correct relationship with God. Solme portrays the law as the means by which God prepares the individual for his salvation by bringing him to the full realisation of his sinful plight. He is followed in this by Frith, Bale, Tyndale, Tracey, Joye, Fish and Barnes.

"This lawe writtine do showe to us howe fare we be absente from the right way. And for this caus, all promissis and maledicions ar putt in the same lawe, there truely the Lorde do promisse, if any shall fulfyll it perfectly and exactly by worde and dede, whatsoever, he comaude, the he wyll geve

1 John Hooper - Ten Commandments 'op cit' Aiii[V]

the rewarde of eternal helth"[1]

The law then sets forth God's righteous demands which mankind must strive to fulfil in order to escape the consequences of Adam's sin. However, since justification was held to be dependent on faith and faith the free gift of God, then this path to eternal life was closed to man. This being the case, all man's attempts to please God were in vain because they were tainted with sin, and yet God had promised salvation to mankind. However, if this promised salvation was to come through the fulfillment of the law, an act clearly impossible for mankind, did this mean that in reality God had reneged on his promise? George Joye believed not, and his belief that God had made an alternative provision for mankinds salvation is representative of that of his fellow reformers. Joye held that the role of the law was not to aid man to eternal life but rather to bring him to a realisation of his own inadequacy, at which point the gospel could be most beneficially put to work.

> "For at the preaching of the law, men know theyr synnes and feale the selfe bounden, of the whych knowleg and feling ther followeth repentaunce.

1 Thomas Solme - The Lordis Flayle. Av^{v}

> And at the preachynge of the Gospel whych promysseth remyssion of synnes there foloweth fayth which loseth the captive coscyence into the quiet lybertye of the spirit"[1].

In full accordance with the doctrine of justification, the law is portrayed as preparing the way for the Gospel, in the same way as the events of the Old Testament prepared the way for Christ. Law and Gospel are seen as working together in a perfect partnership, as epitomies of opposite qualities. For whereas the law leaves the individual in a state of despair and repentance, the Gospel gives him hope and makes him righteous.

> "By the wordes of the lawe no man is justified, but that the lawe was geven to utter and to declare synne only. Then he beginneth and sheweth the ryght waye unto rightewesnes by what meanes men must be made ryghtewes ... Christes rightwesnes which commeth on us throrowe faythe, helpeth us only, which rightewesnes (faith be) ys now declared throwe the gospell."[2]

1 George Joye - Letters of John Ashwell 'op cit' Avi^{r}

2 William Tyndale - Pistle of Paul to the Romayns 'op cit' Bi^{v}

This is not to say that the justified man was released from obeying the laws of God, rather that he had a new responsibility to act in accordance with God's will in all matters. His freedom from the law, consisted of his own ability to obey the law in all its aspects. There was no claim that the law had been superseded by Christ, but on the contrary an insistence that it should be obeyed by the elect and pre-ordained alike. The law was the fullest statement of God's righteousness, which showed mankind the best way to live. Justification did not free a man from the moral and ethical requirements of the law, rather it made him better able to keep them, not from fear of judgement but from a desire to obey God.

In practical terms, this doctrine had far reaching implications for the teaching of the established church, as it relegated canon law to a position of secondary importance to the divine law.

> "For as moche as it appeareth, yn the law of God was not geven to take awaye synne, but rather to declare and punyshe synne: moche lesse any lawe made by man, can avoyde and put away synne. But faythe is the true instrument appoynted by God, whereby synne is overcome and exiled. As the

scripture sayeth, that God through faithe dothe purifye and make cleane all hartes."[1]

Additionally by encouraging people to rely upon their own achievements, the church was guilty of perpetuating Adam's original sin of pride by encouraging the people to approach God with a sense of pride and satisfaction in their own achievements. Hence, the church was effectively hampering, rather than extending man's road to salvation. All man's laws paled into insignificance before the saving act of God, which reached fruition in the individual soul, whenever the Gospel was preached in conjunction with the working of the spirit. Whatever, was not in agreement with God's saving act, or which militated against it was dismissed as the teaching of the devil, be it the outward expression of mans quest for faith or its theoretical basis in the canon law.

"Peter and Paule were but pore simple prestes in cōparison to our holy father the Pope, to the moste reverende Cardinales graces, and to our lordes and byshoppes and yet I thynke they had as great and as large (as you say) power to lose and bind with preachinge the worde of God as hathe the

1 Richard Tracy 'op cit' Av^{r}

Pope, Cardinals, bishop, abbote or priour".[1]

According to Solme, no man was excusable before God, for his sin, as for those who were unaware of the law in the scriptures, God had provided the teaching of natural law, "Lest man shuld be ygnorante of thes thyngis, the lorde dyd geve".[2] Solme believed that God had written this natural law in the hearts of all men, that they might distinguish between right and wrong.

> "This lawe truely is no othere thynge thene mans consotiyens or forknowlege, which is inwerdely a recorde to us of thos thyngis which we owe dively to God, and do showe us that whych is good and yll, and therefore shall accuse and hold us guilty, whils we ar knowne to owreselves, not to be (as we ought) of abilitie to make satisfaccion for ouwre offeutis and mysdedes, that is by owre workis can never satifsfy or purches agen the ryghtwysnes, vertw and lyffe, which are loste by owr one fre wyll."[3]

1 George Joye - Letters of John Ashwell 'op cit' Avii^{r}

2 Thomas Solme 'op cit' Avi^{r}

3 Thomas Solme 'ibid' Avi^{r}

This law too has been clouded by man's sinful nature, and often it is only the fear of punishment that prevents him from doing evil. Natural law also brings the individual to a fear of God's punishment, and in this way it acts in a similar fashion to the Decalogue, also bringing the individual to a state of desperation, and hence to salvation.

Natural law then provides all with an equal chance of forgiveness. It may be asked why then there was any need for the Old Testament law at all. The answer lies in the belief that it was this law which both prepared the way for and culminated in the vicarious death of Christ. God's law paved the way for the salvation of the elect. It was also necessary that God should provide all mankind with some form of ethical guidance. This also explains the very existence of natural law. Additionally, the spirit which was held to be eternally present in man's soul, was also thought to work through his conscience, in response to both types of law.

IV FAITH AND WORKS

As a natural consequence of their teaching on the law, and in accordance with the doctrine of justification, Englands earliest Protestants, denied, without reservation, that man might act as a co-worker with God to secure his own salvation. For as the author of The Sum of Holye Scripture concluded, man must trust "allenly in the faith of Jesus Christ and in the grace of God"[1]

This debate over the relationship of faith and works, marked one of the most important doctrinal divisions between the establishment and the reforming movement. For whilst Robert Barnes writing in 1534 could readily accept a form of justification by faith and works, the words of John Hooper better express the beliefs of his fellow reformers; Richard Tracy, Simon Fish, Thomas Solme, John Frith, George Joye, and William Tyndale.

> "Noe there is nor never was any man borne of the state of Adame in original synne that servyd god

1 Simon Fish - The Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Aii^{r}

as moche as the law requirethe nor never had souche constant fayth as ys requiryd, nor souche ardent love as it requirythe. I seyng these vertews that the law requiryd be infirm and debite, for there meritecue can optayne nothing of god. We must therfore only trust to the merites of Christ whiche satisfied the extreme lot and uttermost point of the law for us and this his justice and perfection he imputithe and comunicatithe withe us by faythe".[1]

The basis for this radical rejection of the Church's teaching lay in the belief that although a man may choose to do good works, these do not of necessity make a good man. Works which were good but which fell outside the sphere of faith, were held to be wrongly motivated, and therefore, as simply leading a man deeper into the realms of sin. This led Richard Tracy to caution his readers against seeking to earn God's grace and hence salvation.

"For althoughe we worke good workes (as we wante all, for there is not one that beth good, for we are all sinners) yet let us believe that for

1 John Hooper - A Declaration of Christ 'op cit' Fvi[v]

> Christes sake we are receyved frely into our fathers grace. Thy ryghtwysness is set forth of his mercy for us wythoute the workes of the law. Wherfore surely, it were great blasphemye against Christe an no less defiling of his mercy seate, not to recyve the merites of hys passion that is to say the ryghtwysnes by fayth, but to turne it into owr synfull workes"[1]

Faith and works were set as opposites to each other. Faith meant the total denunciation of self achievement and a heightened sense of self inadequacy. Reliance upon works meant an increased sense of pride and rejoicing in self achievement. The one drew man to salvation, the other drove him ever further away. Therefore, the reformers and the established church were driven irreconcilably apart on an issue central to the whole controversy.

How then did this effect the beliefs of the laity, to whom the fine distinctions of the scholastics remained a mystery?

In the first instance, such teaching appeared to destroy the certainty of salvation offered by the

1 Richard Tracy - 'op cit' Avi[v]

established church. For if good works were insufficient then pilgrimages, relics and even that most certain way of all, monasticism, could not guarantee a man his salvation. Indeed, if this was the true interpretation of salvation, then the man who had devoted his whole life to good works, or to the observance of church rituals, was in actuality further from heaven, than the man who had faith in the grace of God, but gave little credence to the doctrines of the church.

Generally these early reformers did not see this as a problem. The author of The Sum of Holye Scripture holds the opposite to be true, saying of justification by works "we shuld ever have byn uncertyn whether we shuld have byn saved or not, for we shuld never have knowen whether we had done good ynough to have deserved thy lyfe eternall"[1]

Far from offering less certainty of salvation, the new faith offered total certainty. The all sufficient atoning death of Christ offered a firm promise of absolute and all embracing forgiveness for all who believed. The division between those who depended on good works, and those who relied on faith alone, was so

1 Simon Fish - Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Ev^{r}

absolute that it became possible to divide people into two categories, the elect and those predestined to damnation.

The elect man was held to possess the characteristics of humility, making no claims for the saving powers of his own good works. He does not seek to deprive God of his glory, or to belittle the sacrifice of Christ by placing his own achievements on a equal level. This Thomas Solme advised his readers was the only way in which they might become recipients of the gifts of God.

> "The worde of God is veryte and truth, which do promysse to us all thos thingis ... which we shall never optayn but by a lyvely and a true fayth by this we confesse all owre goodnes to be in him, we truly to be nothynge, but in him and for certente we must asvere and promyse to owreselves in him to be made the chyldren of God, and partakers of the Kyngdom of God" [1]

In complete contrast those who fit into the second category are the people who are dependent on self achievement. These are the people who think that God owes them entry into the Kingdom of Heaven, and on this basis they stand condemned bacause they deprive God of his sovereignty.

1 Thomas Solme - 'op cit' Aviii v

Furthermore, this reliance on good works deceived the individual into a false sense of security, a deception aided by the teaching and practices of the Church itself. Accordingly, Frith spoke of a clergy who in these works had such great confidence that they not only trusted they would be saved but also promised others the forgiveness of their sins through the merits of the same, thus excluding them from the true forgiveness of sins which came only through faith in Christ's blood. Consequently, a second important effect of the doctrine of justification was to be made visible in the actual practical functioning of the Church, with the insistence that all church practices which took their impetus from the doctrine of faith and works were purged from the church.

In practice this would have resulted in devastating visible and practical changes within England's churches. Prayers for the intercession of the saints along with their visible images would have been banished, as would the sacraments of confession, penance, and extreme-unction. The sacraments of baptism and communion would have taken on a new meaning. Pilgrimages to shrines would have been banned, and the shrines themselves closed. For the ordinary man the change would have been startling, for all of the outward expression of popular piety would of necessity have vanished. Elaborately decorated churches, along with their

equally elaborate ceremonies would have become a thing of the past, to be replaced by the reading of the Bible in the vernacular, and the edification of the people with biblically based sermons. Justification by faith demanded no less. For as Joye wrote the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven consisted of "the law and the gospell, preached or reade, for that the one bindeth and the other losethe the believers from synne"[1]. Thus, it was essential that all people had open access to it, which in reality meant that it had to be distributed in the vernacular.

The established church was judged to have failed to provide for the needs of its flock, because it had unashamedly ignored the word of God, substituting the laws of man in its place. Whereas, the Church had found support for its belief in the weight of antiquity and canon law, the early Protestants preferred to rely on the pure arguments of scripture. Conformity with the New Testament teaching was held to be the only basis by which a belief might be validated, or in the case of those beliefs which failed to comply with this norm condemned. This stance is clearly evident in the Sum of Holye Scripture, where the author discussing the

1 George Joye - Letters of John Ashwell 'op cit' Aviii^{r}

issue of faith and works, uses Pauls letter to the Romans to validate his teaching.

> "By all these scriptures here maist thou see that we be all the children of God, alonly throwe faith and this had god ever promyse unto us bicause of oure faith than bicause of oure good workes to thintent that we shuld be so moche the more certyn of oure helth".[1]

In rejecting the idea that a man could aid God in securing his own salvation, two condiderations are taken into account. The rejection is based partially on the belief that in thinking he can be a co-worker with God, man seeks to be like God, and thus deprives God of his glory. In so doing mans forgiveness is made partially dependent upon his own sinful works, and hence infringes on the sovereignty of God. Furthermore, such claims make a mockery of the death of Christ by rendering it unnecessary and meaningless. This too was unacceptable in a Christology which placed great emphasis on the centrality of the saving act of Christ.

1 Simon Fish - <u>The Sum of Holye Scripture.</u> Eiv^{V}

"Whosoever believeth or thinketh to be saved by his workes, denieth yt Christ is his saviour, yt Christ died for him, in all thinges yt ptayneth to Christ. For how is he thy savioure, if thou mightest save thy selfe by thy workes, or wherto shulde he dye for ye in any workes might have saved ye and what is this to saye, Christ dyed for ye verelye yt is, thou shouldest have died petuallye, and Christ to delyver ye from ye deeth died for ye and chaunged thy perpetyall deeth into his own deeth".[1]

Additionally, since man was seen as unable to either detract from, or add to, the glory of God, good works could not be anything other than ineffective. Thomas Solme informed his readers that no matter how much a man sinned, or how great that sin, he was unable to impinge upon the glory and sovereignty of God. Conversely, no amount of good works could benefit God, or add to the glory which belongs to the divine sovereignty.

"There is nothing lefte in us to do ony thinge which is accepte or cane be to God, nor is not lefte in owre vertewe to pacyfy or to make

1 Patrick Hamilton - 'op cit' Bvi^{V}

acceptable to him, never the lesse we do not sesse to be detters in that thinge, which we can not geve or restore. In as much we be the creatures of God, he beynge all myghty do not sesse to treat and conserve us most wrechyd and synfull, therfore er we ever bounde to sereve his honor and glory in knowlegyng his goodnes, and owr one infirmyte in observyge his comaundmentes".[1]

Mankind then was held unable to diminish the glory of God by sin, because man's actions could have no effect on the infinite deity. Thus the sovereignty of God was protected. However, as Simon Fish's work pointed out, although man could not touch upon God's sovereignty, he could rob God of the honour that is due to him as "All they that thinke that theyre good workes help enythyng, or proufit for to get the gift of salvacyon they blaspheme ageynst the might and goodness of God (Gal 5)".[2]

How then was the Christian to relate to the world? If good works were no longer a necessary part of salvation was the Christian still bound to perform them, or was he free to live outside of the world? The doctrine of

1 Thomas Solme - 'op cit' Aiii^{v}

2 Simon Fish - Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Dv^{r}

justification without works was potentially problematic, in that it removed man's motivation for doing that which was considered good. For after all if God was to take no heed of good works giving salvation only to those he chose, what reason was there for doing the type of good, which lay outwith the confines of natural law.

However, if justification brought freedom it also brought responsibility. Certainly the justified man was free from the confines of the law, and yet at one and the same time took upon him a new responsibility both to God and to his fellow men. In the first place the Christian although chosen out of the temporal world still remained subject to its temporal demands and restrictions. Additionally, whilst realising that occasionally a time would arise when a Christian might need to go against the temporal law, the reformers[1] emphasised that this defiance should not be of a negative but of a positive nature.

True Christianity was seen as consisting of a positive approach to the world. Good works which were rejected

1 John Frith, Thomas Solme, Simon Fish, Henry Brinkelow, William Tyndale, Robert Barnes, William Turner and John Hooper.

as a means of salvation still had an important part to play in the life of the man who was justified by faith. However, as John Frith taught there was a great difference between good works done before justification and good works done after justification. Works done before justification were held to be done for the wrong reason. However, works done after justification were seen as carried out in the spirit of love and charity which proceeds from faith in God's saving act. The justified man was held to have forsaken self, looking to Christ in trust and faith.

> "Nowe were thou verye fonde and unkynde if though thought to purchase by thy workes the thinge which is already geve the. Therefore must thou do thy workes with a sengle yie havinge neyther respecte unto the joyes of heven neither yet to the paynes of hel but onlye do them for the profyte of thy neyghboure as God comaundeth the and let hym alone wyth the resydue."[1]

According to Simon Fish, the true Christian avoided sin, not for hope of any reward but purely out of love

1 John Frith - Disputacion of purgatory 'op cit' Eviii[v]

for God and his neighbour. For although sin can cause no harm to God, as the Sum of Holye Scripture says "the daũger that is in oure synne is the evil example that we give to our neighbour in that we hurt him thereby dispising the good council of oure goode god, whiche he has given us in his holy comaũdmetes."[1]

Thus far from prompting irresponsibility, faith was envisaged as conferring a new responsibility on its recipient. It did not release a man to live as he pleased, but placed upon the individual obligations which he was to perform in a bond of love. The justified man was expected to testify to his new found salvation by willing obedience to the commandments of God, obedience which was best achieved by the imitation of Christ who alone was perfect amongst men. This did not encompass the observation of church regulations, which only served the needs of those who did not truly love God. In contrast the true Christian was the man who followed the example of Christ and found his sanctification in the service of others.

> "We shall do an lyve so with owre Christen brethren, as Christ hath lived and done with us, that is to say as Jesu Christ hath offered himsilf

1 Simon Fish - Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Gi^{v}

> to us and for us so must we present give ouresilves as it were a Christ for to serve theym, and to socoure unto there nede [John 3, Philippians 2]"[1]

The imitation of Christ was not held to be the prerogative of the clergy since Christ's life was an example for all men. All those who had received God's forgiveness were expected to do all for the love and honour of God. The Christian faith itself was held to consist of four elements; the righteousness of God, the salvific death of Christ, the justification of the individual, and the constant process of sanctification.

In conclusion then, the reformers did not discount or belittle the value or the importance of good works in their proper context. What they did do, was to reinterpret the place of good works in the chronology of man's salvation, and to translate them into their proper position in relation to the doctrine of justification by faith. The whole ethos of their understanding of God and the salvation of mankind, could not allow for the belief that man might contribute in any way to God's work through the spirit.

1 Simon Fish - 'ibid' Giii[v]

Additionally man's works were also discounted because they were tainted with sin. It was therefore, only when justification had purified the motives of the individual that his works could be made acceptable to God. This was the only way in which the reformers could resolve the conflict of interests which arose, from their emphasis on the sovereignty of God and the helplessness of sinful man.

However, despite their well documented policies for reform, all attempts to transfer these into actual practice, were subjected to strong opposition from both the government and the people. In the first instance the ordinary people had no real desire to see any radical change, and they rallied to preserve the ancient forms of worship. A move which culminated in the Pilgrimage of Grace.

Secondly the King and his advisers had reservations about placing the unedited version of the Bible into the hands of the populace, for fear that they too would mis-interpret some of its teachings, as had the peasants in Germany. Consequently this reluctance to enact change prohibited the reformers from carrying their gospel of justification directly to the ordinary people, a vast majority of whom doubtless remained content in the belief that they had a role to play in the enactment of their own salvation.

Additionally, justification by faith placed a great deal of emphasis upon the individuality of religion. This in turn resulted in a great amount of doctrinal diversification, as was well attested by events on the continent. Henry VIII had no real desire to see the breakdown of religious uniformity in his country. Hence when reform did come it was conservative, gradual and primarily tightly controlled from above, in order that uniformity might be preserved.

V PREDESTINATION

Although a majority of the reformers readily accepted that justification was by faith alone and easily accessible to all who believed, the seeds of predestination were already detectable in the works of John Frith, Robert Barnes and John Hooper. This belief which made salvation the possession of only a few elect was to gain momentum in the later Genevan reform[1] and reach full realisation in the rigid puritanism of seventeenth century England[2], as is well attested by the Lambeth Articles of 1604. Here the doctrine of predestination is defined in the most complete and absolute form.[3]

1 J.A. Dorner - History of Protestant Theology vol 1, 396-403 Edinburgh 1871.

2 H. Davies - Worship and Theology in England Vol 1. Cramner to Hooker Princeton University Press 1970.

3 "Deus ab aeterno praedestinavit quosdam ad vitam et quosdam ad mortem reprobavit" Lambeth Articles 19 April 1604 - Emile.G. Leonard - A History of Protestantism vol 2 p 116 Nelson 1967.

Both Barnes and Frith depict God as deliberately selecting the few to whom he chooses to give the gift of faith and hence the gift of salvation, whilst at the same time leaving the remainder to their justly deserved future as the reprobate. Thus justification is once again removed from the sphere of mans influence and power.

> "We are sure of, yt whomesoever he chuseth, them he saveth of his mercy, and in whome he repelleth them of his secrete and unsearchable judgement he condemneth. But why he chuseth the one and repelleth the other, enquire not if thou wilte no erre."[1]

Whilst Frith was content simply to accept the matter as a divine mystery, Barnes went on to develop the doctrine in some detail. The ideas which he expounded were not unique, and the influences of the Lutheran reform are clearly evident in his work. The debate over predestination did not suddenly arise with the reformers doctrine of justification, although it was perhaps heightened by the implication of this doctrine. The debate went back as far as the time of Augustine,

1 John Frith - A mirroure to know thyselfe - Antwerp M. Crom 1536 p Aiv^{V}

and both Luther and Barnes accept his teaching on the process of election and reprobation.

The reformers taught that man was justified by faith which was the free gift of God. This justification was held to occur when the individual prompted by the Holy Spirit, responded to the preaching of the gospel. This was of course carried out in accordance with God's will to save all of mankind. However, although God willed that all men be saved in actuality not all who heard the gospel were able to recognise its truth and respond accordingly. For this there seemed two possible explanations; either God is unable to bring about this salvation if it is imposed by the will of man, or that God deliberately hardens the hearts of the reprobate, so that they will not be justified.

The former of course was unacceptable because it contradicted the reformers' belief in an infinite God who was totally unaffected by any thing that man did, either good or sinful. The latter was also problematic, for although this was the explanation accepted by Barnes, it raises the question of how God could be both righteous and merciful, and yet at the same time deliberately exclude so many from salvation. Barnes and Frith could not of course accept that the divine will was inconsistent, and therefore they chose to consign the issue to the realm of God's purposes,

which whilst remaining righteous were beyond the comprehension of man. such was their belief in God's righteousness they were certain that he would administer justice, and were content to rest secure in the knowledge that all would be made clear when God's kingdom was fully revealed.

> "For when God saveth so fewe men and dammeth so many and thou knowest no cause why, yet must thou beleve that he ys mercyfulle and ryghtwyse, this is faithe whiche yf it culde be proved by exterior causys then were yt no nede to beleve yt."[1]

The doctrine of justification made the individual totally reliant upon God for his salvation. Seemingly predestination meant that even if a man truly desired salvation his quest would be unfulfilled unless God had first chosen him from amongst the many who were already foreordained to damnation. Barnes accepted the idea that God could fairly judge all mankind as he was unlimited by the confines of time, along with the belief that God could anticipate the individuals response to the proffered gift of salvation, hence bringing God's judgement into accordance with his righteousness.

1 Robert Barnes - <u>supplication 1531</u> M vii^{r}

Additionally, Barnes like Luther, accepted the idea of a double predestination, but although God hardens hearts and uses evil to his own purposes, he is not directly responsible for the existence of that evil. Therefore, Barnes simply understood predestination as the free determination of the divine will concerning those who are to be saved. He believed that God freely provides everything which is necessary for the redemption of his elect, including faith which is only possible when it is decreed by God. In contrast God is not responsible for the evil which excludes men from salvation, this evil has its roots in the nature of mankind and the exercise of man's free will.

> "Those yt be good, be good by his grace, those that be bad, be bad of coruptid nature ... and can abyde nothynge that is good nor yet suffer any good to be done, wherefore when god ye autor of the goodnes doeth any thynge unto them, than are they more and more, farar and farar contrary unto god and to alle hys workes, for of their nature they are so corrupted and can not agre to the wylle of god nor to any thynge that is good."[1]

In this way Barnes safeguarded both God's righteousness

1 Robert Barnes 'ibid' Nii^{r}

and mans free will, and firmly placed the responsibility for damnation with mans flawed nature, and not upon Gods inability to impose his will upon the individual soul.

Since predestination was taught in the scriptures its validity could not be questioned. However, despite its scriptural roots, the possibility that such a doctrine might result in despair amongst the weaker members of the Christian community could not be totally discounted. Additionally, such despair could result in detrimental consequences for Christian society as a whole. For now it appeared that faith was not only dependent upon God's grace, but that the individuals response to that grace was already pre-determined. Thus the certainty of salvation was still further diminished in the eyes of the ordinary people.

How then did the reformers overcome this problem, and ensure that Christians were not demoralised in their quest for faith? After all they claimed that the doctrine of justification carried with it a greater certainty of salvation, than did the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. Barnes like Luther believed that, despite the fact that God predestined souls either to election or perdition, Christians should not fall into despair, but instead persevere in their quest for salvation.

"... though an Angelle wolde make the beleve that alle the worlde would be damned, yet stycke thou faste to hys mercy, and to his justis, that iustyfye the, and beleve that the swete bloude of his blessed sonne cannot be shed in vayne, but it must needs justify synners and so meny as sticke fast unto it, though they be never so hardened, for it was shed alonly for them, yf thou canste thus satisfye thy selfe tha dost thou well, and thou are doutles out of juperdy."[1]

Perseverance then became the genuine criterion for election in the theology of Barnes. In this sense he gave the individual a renewed hope, and in fact a certainty of faith. This is not to say that he accepted that man could in some way contribute towards his salvation. In fact the contrary is true. Barnes remained constant in his rejection of the efficacy of works, until the publication of a revised version of the Supplication in 1534.

"Eleccion strode alonly by his wylle for so were you suer that it shulde be bothe rightwyselye done and also mercyfully, but you have no faith and therefore must you nedes mystrust god, and of that

1 Robert Barnes 'ibid' Mviii^{V}

faile you to invet causys of eleccion of youre owne strengthe."[1]

Election like faith remained the free gift of God. Barnes made no concessions upon this point. To him the faithful could be as certain of election as they could be of justification. Hence, predestination offered no less certainty of salvation, than did the straight foreward doctrine of justification by faith. In both instances faith was conferred by God in response to the preaching of his word.

In this manner those who had faith could be certain of their election through God's grace. Additionally, Barnes believed that election manifested itself through two positive signs in the lives of the elect. In the first instance a mans state of grace could be measured by his response to the preaching of God's word. Those who are the elect of God are expected to respond to the preaching of the word in the appropriate manner, it should enlighten their souls and bring them to a clear understanding of God and his righteousness. Conversely, "whane the blessed worde of god is preached unto them nothing amended, but more inducated and alle wayes harder and harder, and yt more the worde of god is

1 Robert Barnes 'ibid' Mviii^{r}

preached the more obsitnate they are, the more myscheffe intenden they."[1]

The second indication of a man's election was evidenced by his continual sanctification. This was made manifest when the individual acted towards his neighbour in the love of God. Of course neither of the two signs could be an absolute guarantee that the individual was a member of the elect. There was after all no reason why some of the reprobate should not also manifest similar, if limited signs both in response to the gospel and in response to the needs of others.

This uncertainty had obvious implications for the establishment of an earthly church. It was impossible for a man to be totally certain of his own spiritual state, how much less was it possible to know whether or not others were amongst the elect. Therefore, the earthly church had to be all embracing. Elect and reprobate alike belonged to this church. Of course in some cases the reprobate could be clearly identified. For example, those whose lives were in direct contradiction to the word of God. Barnes cited the Bishops who supressed the preaching of Gods word, as one such example. The problem was of course that

1 Robert Barnes 'ibid' Niii^{r}

carried to extremes predestination could result in the emergence of an elect body, which excluded all others from the merits of Christ's all embracing death.

The issue of predestination seems to receive little coverage in the works of the English reformers, as the doctrine was not widely contended until the 1550's. A majority of the early reformers wanted to present the new faith as reasonable and all embracing. They sought to persuade Henry to oust the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church in favour of the reforming movement, on the grounds that he had a responsibility for the spiritual as well as the temporal welfare of his subjects . A doctrine which seemed on the surface to encourage elitism, would not have aided them in this already difficult task. However, as predestination was basically no more than an extension of the doctrine of justification, it was ultimately to become enshrined in the English tradition, through the theological developments of both the Anglican and Puritanical branches of the English Protestant tradition.

VI SANCTIFICATION

From the fundamental tenet of justification by faith sprang the doctrine of sanctification, for justification whether viewed in the terms of a continual or a once and for all event was seen as no more than the beginning of a much lengthier process of Christian development. Once justified the Christian embarked on a process of sanctification which was both initiated and directed by the work of the Holy Spirit. The ensuing process of sanctification involved the individual in the development of a continually increasing understanding of the faith, and a renewed involvement in the Christian life.

> "We take faith for the beginninge of the Christen life, but truely he that hath parfaith fath, the same hath not only beganne the Chrissten lyfe, but, hath fulfilled it."[1]

Consequently there can be no sanctification unless a man is first justified in Christ. Sanctification was

1 Simon Fish - Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Avi[v]

seen as only occurring when Christ already dwelt in the individual's heart, creating the conditions necessary for the restoration of the perfect relationship between God and man. The whole life of the individual was held to be reorientated by his union with Christ. Through faith and penitence the old Adam was mortified, and the new man embarked on a process of regeneration.

However, not all manifested the same inclination to love in their everyday lives, and this diversity was explained by the fact that the redeemed man still remained in a state of sin, although the taint and consequence of this sin were over-ridden by the abiding presence of Christ. The justified man did not instantaneously become knowledgeable about God's word, the accumulation of understanding, like the battle with sin, was a gradual progression towards the righteousness required by God.

> "This sanctification is none other but a trew knolege of God in Christ by the gospell that teachyth us how unclene we are by the synne of Adamme, an how that we are clensid by Christ for whois sake the father of heaven doothe not only remitt the sinnes wrowght wyllyngly agaynst the word of God, but also the imperfeciton and

naturall cocupiscens whiche remayn the in every man as long as the nature of man is imortall."[1]

Sanctification then, partially consisted of a life of constant penitence, and the individual's realisation that he was still far from that perfect righteousness required by God. Hooper, Fish, Frith and Johnson held that man's imperfect nature could never achieve a true grasp of the righteousness of God, or a full awareness of his righteous requirements. Left to his own devices even the faithful would drift once again into sin. Therefore, God had provided guidance for his elect through the dual functions of the word and the spirit.

"Although we be delyvered fro the maledictiion, course and damation of the law ... yet we bound to the obedience of the law, whiche is Godes will to kepe us from lyvyng ille ... The wysdom of man not governyd by the word of God doothe soon erre. It is caryd for the most part withe affections and chosithe the workes that be contrary to the law of God. Therefore this is trew, that the ordinaunce of God still remainthe in the justified man immutable, that he must obey the law, and serve in

1 John Hooper - Declaration of Christ 'op cit' Iiii^{r}

his vocacion according to the scripture, that the exterior feder may bare testimonye of the inward reconciliation."[1]

In the first instance, God's law took on a new importance in the life of the Christian . Since the scriptures provided the only clear and accurate record of God's righteous requirements, it was from here that the Christian could best derive a code of conduct for his everyday life.

If the individual was dependent upon the scripture as a guideline for his conduct in relation to the world in which he lived, then it was essential that the scriptures should be made available in the vernacular, and hence accessible to all who chose to read them. Secondly, it was equally important that the scriptures were both read in church, and applied to the contemporary situation through the preaching of the clergy. These two elements were to become an essential part in the reformed liturgies, and their absence from the established church one of the many grounds upon which it was repudiated as the true body of Christ.

1 John Hooper - Declaration of Christ 'op cit' Miv[v]

The individual's increasing awareness of God's righteousness was to be evident in his behaviour towards the other parts of God's creation, as he was expected to act towards his fellow men in the perfect love of God. Failure to do so was seen as a sure indication that faith was either weak or totally absent from the individual's soul.

> "Fayth only justifyeth maketh ryghtewes, and fulfylleth the lawe, for it bringeth the spirte thorowe Christes deseryysnges the spirite bringeth lust, looseth the hert, maketh hym fre setteth hym at lyberte and geveth hym strengthe to work the dedes of the lawe with love, even as the lawe requireth, then at the last out of the same fayth so workynge in the herth, springe all good workes by theire awe acorde."[1]

Furthermore the good works of the justified man were held to far surpass those of the man seeking to earn his salvation, for they were done in a spirit of self renunciation, and for the sake of God's love alone. The works of the spirit, through the justified man epitomised the righteousness of the Kingdom of God. Such works could never be done by man alone, since by

1 William Tyndale - <u>Pistle of Paul to the Romayns</u> 'op cit' Av^{r}

his very nature anything he did whilst still in a state of sin, would fall short of Gods righteousness.

> "That fayth which aryseth of the Gospell preachynge, bryngeth forth the workes of the Gospell which are wholsome frutes of the sprete as love, gladness, peace, pacience, gentyleness, goodness, longe sufferynge, faythfulnesse, mekeness, chastite, temperaunce, with sache otherlyke [Gal V]."[1]

Through faith the individual was expected to renounce all self interest in the service of others. He was also expected to worship God in all things and circumstances, whether they were good or bad. This included the state of suffering and tribulation which was a sure confirmation of their unity in Christ. Because suffering was so often the destiny of the early Protestants, the exiled writers frequently encouraged their readers to accept persecution gladly in the hope of the reward to come. They often did this by citing the case of other reformers who had paid the ultimate penalty for their belief. It is not unusual to find a record of the propositions for which they were condemned, accompanying the account of their trial and

1 Henry Stalybridge - Epistle Exhoratorye C^r

death. In some cases, such as that of John Frith, the reformers gave an account of their own trial and condemnation, becoming examples for others to emulate. Additionally they sought to portray the justness of their cause, in contrast to the unjust attempts of the church, to supress the truth, as a means of self defence.

The Sum of Holye Scripture is a fine example of this type of encouragement. Not one reformer is mentioned by name, but its readers were encouraged to exult in their suffering, as it was a sure sign that God would reward them in the future. Suffering was seen as an integral part of God's will for his people. The author of this book chose to compare suffering and tribulations as a form of purgatory on earth. It was seen as a process of purification, which prepared men for their role in the Kingdom of God.

> "There is no more certeyn signe of everlasting helth then when a man lyveth justly, and hath always adeversite, for that it is that God sendeth us fore oure sinnes and oure purgatory, or so make open his glorye in oure pacyence."[1]

1 Simon Fish - The Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Di[r]

Furthermore, the document encourages Christians to suffer in patience, in the certainty that through such suffering they would share in the experience of Christ, who had also suffered and died. Of course it was not only the suffering which they shared with Christ, but also the reward. Suffering, therefore, was a thing to be welcomed and not spurned, as was death. The book thus sought to encourage its readers in a time of hardship, and to show them the benefits of remaining true to the gospel.

> "Such wiling deth which is taken with a good will and by such fayth and trust, and also by the love that we have to god, all synnes are clearly delated and put away. For none can do more greate penaunce then to dye willingly for to fulfill the will of God."[2]

Such an act of self denial was of course made easier by the belief that although Christians lived in the world, and to this extent were a part of it, they had also been set apart from it by a their justification and sanctification in the grace of God. The reformers has a strong sense of eschatology, which became prominent in this area of their work. This eschatological

1 Simon Fish 'ibid Hiv^{V}

teaching had two frames of reference. Firstly, it referred to the coming of Christ and his salvation to all who through God's grace had faith, and hence to the establishment of God's Kingdom in all who believed. This was placed in direct contrast to the way of mankind, where works were allocated an important role in the quest for salvation.

Additionally, it had a second significance and referred to the actual Parousia of Christ, when all who were justified by faith, would gain entrance to the fully established Kingdom. Those who died outside the church excommunicated for their adherence to the teachings of the scripture hence had nothing to fear beyond the pain of the stake. Death was relegated to the status of the sleep from which Christ would wake them on the day of judgement.

Sanctification then was the life long process, by which after the act of justification, the individual came to know more about God and his righteous demands. The process of sanctification completed the work which had begun at justification, and if God chose that the individual should suffer, this was just an additional means of encouraging him to direct his life fully towards God's will, devoid of earthly concerns. Further more, sanctification too reflected the Christocentric theology of the early reform movement in that it

maintained the elevated position of Christ as central to man's salvation. For sanctification, like justification, was impossible unless the believer acted out of his love and union in Christ.

SECTION C

THE CHRISTIAN STATE

I AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE

> "We have by good and wholesome laws and statutes made for this purpose, extirped, abolished, separated,and secluded out of this realm, the abuses of the bishop of Rome, his authority and jurisdiction of long time usurped ... nobles and commons both spiritual and temporal, assembled in our high court of parliament, have upon good, lawful, and virtuous grounds, and for the public weal of this our realm, by one whole assent, granted, annexed, knit and united to the crown imperial of the same, the title, dignity, and style of supreme head of governor in earth immediately under God, of the Church of England."[1]

The 1534 parliamentary act acknowledging the supremacy of the king over both estates, spiritual and temporal, effectively abolished all papal rights within England. It thus determined the end of a belief system which drew a firm distinction between the spiritual estate and the temporal, the power of the church and the power of the king. It was the final stage of a long and

1 Foxe 'op cit' Vol V p 69

protracted struggle in which successive Popes and Kings had battled to further assert their power at the expense of the other party.

Prior to the break with Rome, England had always fared better than some of her European counterparts in this continual struggle for power, as in England the king had long claimed the right to exercise a limited amount of control over the church in his realm. The Statutes of Provisors of Praemunire weakened clerical influence, by according powers to the King enabling him to protect his regality from clerical infringement. Additionally, the King had long retained the right to sanction the appointment of bishops to meet his political requirements.

The English achievement in this sphere was perhaps best embodied in the person of Cardinal Wolsey who was both papal representative and Kings chancellor. The Statutes of Praemunire gave the King a powerful weapon, to use against the problems of clerical exemption, and the claims of the spirituality to temporal power.

The reformers sought to encourage the King to assert his right to exercise authority over the Church in England. Thus he would be enabled to purge the Church of its worst abuses, which were perpetuated under the protection of the papacy. To this purpose they were

eager to persuade Henry that he was within his divine rights as King, to exercise total authority over the Church within his realm. By bitter polemical attacks against the clerical lifestyle of luxury and immorality, and an emphasis on the political dangers of both clerical wealth and clerical exemption, they sought to persuade Henry to act against Rome. They also called upon Henry to reform the Church , in his role as its divinely appointed head. Eager to prove that Protestant theology posed no threat to order and authority, they made great efforts to teach their adherents that they should submit totally to the sovereigns will and command.

As in all matters the reformers turned to the practices of the early church and the early fathers to find the true basis for their teaching upon this issue. Here they found ample evidence for the divine origins of the temporal power. From both the New Testament and the work of the early Fathers, they were able to draw support for their belief that temporal power was conferred by the direct will of God, without the need or use of Papal mediation. The reformers, therefore like Marsilio of Padua and Zwingli concluded that obedience was due first to the King, above all other calls for allegiance.

"Therfore by chause we er comaundyd in meny placis of scripture to obay owr princis, and can fynde in

> no place the Pope, therfore we may affirme al Kyngis with theyre ministers to be the true electe hedis under god, the Pope and his secte to be very enemyes of the crose of Christ very Antichristis agenst God and his name. Therfore lett all men be obedient to theyre princis, and we in speciall to owre Kynge Henry the VIII."[1]

In this manner the reformers hoped to awaken the interest of Henry VIII in the reformation cause. They presented him with an alternative to papal authority, in an attempt to enlist his support for a cause which would otherwise fail. From the time they had spent on the continent they were acutely aware that if the cause was to succeed, it must have the backing of the prince or, as in case of some of the Swiss cities, the magistrates, or church fathers. After all Luther's success in Germany had been partially due to his appeal to the growing nationalistic sentiments of the German princes, nobility and people.

By offering Henry the grounds on which to justify his assumption of power over the church, the reformers were actually trying to advance their reforming cause in a manner which was politically expedient, if not totally

1 Thomas Solme 'op cit' Di^{V}

desirable from a theological or ecclesiological view. By the time the works of Simon Fish and William Tyndale were introduced to Henry by Protestant sympathisers, he was deeply embroiled in contention with Rome over his proposed divorce from Catherine of Aragon. The early reformers offered Henry the chance to marry Anne Boleyn and ensure an heir to the throne, thus bringing political stability to the kingdom after his death. In addition they provided reforming ideas with an opportunity to gain a foothold amongst the most prestigious in the land. They knew that if Henry took their advice, and denounced papal authority in England, consequently freeing the church from Roman domination, reform could freely follow in the newly established church.

They were, however, also fully aware of the possible consequences which could follow if Henry proved to be either hostile or simply disinterested in their cause, and these of course they sought to prevent, rather than later attempt to remedy.

One of these consequences meant that all members of the state were placed firmly under the princes control. There were no exceptions. Nobility and clergy alike were under an oath of obedience. The King could thus impose his will totally and absolutely upon both estates.

In addition to holding sovereignty over the church, the King was also allocated the task of supervising its spiritual welfare. This was his duty as God's elected. Kings having received their sword from God were duty bound to bring about change in the Church, if and when it was required, for the benefit of the commonwealth. Failure to do so meant failure to execute their duty before God, and so merited appropriate punishment from the deity.

Adherence to this principle made itself manifest in one of two ways. Either the church and state became an indivisible whole, as in the manner of the Swiss city states (where the magistrates and the clergy worked together to establish the Christian commonwealth, taking into consideration theological, political, and social needs) or, as in the case of England, where the Church became subsumed into the regality of the Prince, to serve his political and economic needs whilst the initiative for true reform remained absent.

In the realm of church and state, the Reformation witnessed not so much the birth of a new ideology, but the logical conclusion of a theory which permitted two so divorced, yet such intertwined powers to co-exist side by side. The Reformation ideology did not consist of a return to the ideas of Gelasius I, but rather developed its own definition of the two swords, along

equal distinctive lines. However, this time it was not the Pope who reigned supreme but the King, in a theory which inextricably bound church and state together into one power, one unity, and one purpose.

All were basically agreed upon the one premise, namely that the king drew his power from God alone, conditional upon the proper fulfillment of the duties which accompanied it. The King ruled by divine right, answerable for his deeds to God alone. This counteracted papal and clerical claims that the papacy alone, could confer or withdraw the temporal sword as and when it wished. It freed Henry from the need to show due obedience to the papacy, and from the fear that an alienated Pope might be able to deprive him of his throne. It gave Henry the power to divorce Catherine and marry Anne. More importantly, it freed him and his advisers to attack the abuses of the church without fear of papal retribution in the form of excommunication, or the deposition of the King.

This reversal of the late medieval perception of the distribution of temporal and spiritual power had important implications for both church and state. Essentially it released the entire country from external domination by a foreign power. Theoretically and practically it made the king supreme in his own realm, and responsible for the spiritual and temporal

well being of the commonwealth. In actuality it meant that should Henry so wish, he had the power to instruct the church to obey his proclamations, and to change the church as he desired. By divesting the Pope of his claims over the temporality, Tyndale and the other early reformers hoped that Henry would feel obligated to reform the church, as part of the Christian duty which fell to him, as Gods divinely appointed ruler.

However, when these ideas were first proffered by Barnes, Fish and Tyndale in the late 1520's and early 1530's, Henry had shown little inclination to identify himself with the reform movement as such. He had made no attempt to prohibit the persecution of the evangelical preachers. In fact he had done the opposite, actively encouraging his bishops to prevent the spread of reformed literature and to bring its writers to the fire. Although familiar with the works of William Tyndale and his momentary attempts to engineer Tyndale's return by promises of safe conduct, Henry ulitmately refused to intervene on his behalf, allowing the Dutch authorities to condemn and execute him. Similarly in the case of John Frith, whom Henry personally summoned to a trial whereby Frith could only recant or die, the trial was a foregone conclusion, since Frith could never deny that which he held to be the true teaching of Christ.

It was the work of these early reformers that initially prompted the King to assume headship of the English Church, for whilst he repudiated Tyndale's translation of the Bible, he took succour from this definition of the temporal and spiritual powers. The reformers placed in his hands a powerful weapon, with which he might bring about the reform of the Church. It was, however, also an extremely dangerous weapon, open to abuse at the hands of a tyrannical prince.

It also raised the problem of lay obedience to the statutes of the church. For once the king was head of the church and the state, what possible safeguards could there be against the abuse of this power? The real dilemma hinged upon the question as to exactly how far the people were to give obedience to a king, if he acted other than in accordance with Christian beliefs.

Hooper, Fish and Solme sought to safeguard against these dangers, firstly by instructing the King in the duties of a Christian prince and secondly, by instructing the common people in the need for obedience. Henry the divine ruler, although answerable only unto God, still had a weighty duty towards his people and the commonwealth. They bound together the spiritual and temporal swords, and placed them in the hands of one man, that he with his advisers might create a truly Christian society. In order to do this,

this, it was vitally important that the King set an example for his subjects, in order that they might show loyalty towards him and his laws. Again the true test of a Christian King was whether he obeyed the law of the Scriptures. Thus they tried to ensure that the King would obey God's laws, as the means of ensuring the obedience of his subjects.

> "If the kyng, prince, magistrate or rulers of the communewealthe, nor know godes lawes, nor folow justice, equite, temperancye, nor sobriete, what honestye or vertew can they loke to have in there subjects. They must give example of all vertew."[1]

If princes were justified in expecting total obedience from their subjects, then they were equally expected to obey Gods commandments themselves. Thus Henry was constantly reminded of the source and responsibilities of his newly assumed power.

> "God hath commaunded that the gospell be preached to every creature that is to say to all mankind. Bifore god there is no difference nether distinciton whether thou be a comon husbandman, or

1 John Hooper - Ten Commandments 'op cit' p iv^{r}

> a governoure of a towne, or of a country, noble or ignoble, we have all promised at our baptisme the one as moche as the other. We have all taken one rule that is the teching of the gospell after the whiche we must teche and governe oure life."[1]

Temporal authority lay in the hands of the Prince, but ultimate authority lay with God. Those placed in positions of power on earth were not truly free to do as they wish, but must be ever mindful of God's will. In their unique capacity as both temporal and spiritual leaders, the temporal powers had an important part to play in the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth, albeit in an imperfect form, for ultimately they were expected to exercise their earthly powers to establish the godly society here on earth, allocating spiritual and temporal tasks accordingly.

> "A Chrystyn kynge may not only provyd gydis for a polytycke order, but also for a spyrytall order whefor he hate powre to ynstytute gydis of dievers vocacions, whych gydis them er bownd to use themselves acordynge to theyr vocacion. The polytical rulers to use theyr oficis with mercy

1 Simon Fish Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Pii[r]

and iustis, that is in maykenyng the good and correctlynge th yll."[1]

In the Dutch work 'The Sum of Holye Scripture' the author assigned four functions to the temporal authorities in a Christian society.

First and foremost they were to defend the laws of the gospel, and to ensure they were obeyed. The temporal force was at liberty to intervene when God's laws were broken.

> "Thyne intente be to defende the rygteous and innocent, and so with the secular ryght to come yn and ayde unto the ryght of the gospell, reproving and rebuking openly and without favour all unrygteousness."[2]

The secular authority remained the handmaiden of religion, to enforce the law of God. This extended not only to crimes committed by the population, but to all who went against the teaching of the gospel. It also extended to the wealth of the church, which Christ

1 Thomas Solme 'op cit' C viii^{r}

2 Simon Fish 'ibid' Pii^{v}

never intended to be. Thus the authorities were called upon to disendow the church, as part of their duty before God.

Secondly, they were to carry out this duty justly and with mercy and compassion deliberating upon the circumstances of each case individually, not just passing a blanket judgement.

> "Where they have hope and lyklyhood that the evill doers shall amende they must alweys be merciful."[1]

If mercy is a Christian quality, so is love. The author emphasised the need for Christians to act towards one another in love, and thus to settle any dispute without recourse to the law. The secular authority also had a duty to encourage all within his jurisdiction to do thus.

> "They ought to determine the cause with good advysement, and as shortly as we possible, and to

1 'ibid' Dviii^{r} "So take from them all these thynges. Set these sturay loobies abrode in the world to get them wives of theire owne, to get theire living with their laboure in the swete of their faces according to the commandment of god"

exhort the parties to make brotherly appoyntment the one with the other. Showing theym by the gospell that the Christens ought not to have sute and proces among them."[1]

Finally the authorities had a duty to make sure that all members of the community are properly cared for, physically and spiritually, the former by organising poor relief, the latter by the provision of someone to instruct them in the gospel.

"Likewise shulde we provide unto theym an honest man that mought every day make unto them a Sermon shewing to them the word of God for to comforte theym in theyre povertye and languores: which shulde be a service honest hulsome and very acceptable unto God."[2]

Each of the four were held to be essential components of the city of God on earth. Only God has precognition of the elect and the civil government alone could impose Christian standards by force, drawing people to God by the provision of biblical teaching.

1 'ibid' Piii^{r}

2 'ibid' Piv^{r}

John Hooper[1] concurred in this view. He was more specific in his instructions to the King. As the father of the commonwealth the King had a duty to instruct his people in the ten commandments, as they are expounded in Hooper's work. This the King is to do both by teaching and example. Hooper called upon the King to purge the court of all who would oppress the poor, and to ensure that learned ministers were appointed to the church so that the people may be taught true doctrine. All this was to be done in accordance with God's word, as it is recorded in Psalm 100.

The reformers envisaged a Christian State which was dependent upon a finely balanced relationship between the dual nature of the spiritual and temporal powers. The Christian State was more than simply freedom from papal domination, it centered on the need for a very real practical expression of many of the newly re-discovered Christian beliefs. The real problem in hand was not the right of the King to temporal and spiritual jurisdiction, rather its practical and spiritual effects on English society.

1 John Hooper Ten Commandments 'op cit'.

Secular government, in itself, needed no special justification, as it had long been an accepted and acceptable part of medieval society. Its duty was to preserve order and peace within the community. The reformers were only too well aware of the necessity for kingship on these grounds. They spoke highly of the Christian life, God's commandments, brotherly love and Christian responsibility. They were, however, still realistic enough to recognise that the two cities of St. Augustine enjoyed a continuing presence in sixteenth century Christendom, and that because of this dual nature of society, it was necessary to have human laws which pertained to the common good of the people. Laws which may have emanated from either the spiritual or the temporal powers needed to be enforced by a central body.

> "... they that have wenly the temporalle swerde, whereby, they must order all the commenwealthe with alle wordly thynges longynge there unto as the disposicio̅ of these wordly goodes, who shal be ryght owner and who not, the probacion of mens testimentes, the orderyng of paymentes and custos the settynge of alle maner of taskes and forfytes, the correccion of alle transgressions, where by the commenwelthe, or any private person is dysqueted or wronged ... and of all other thynges where unto belongeth any outward orderinge or any

corporalle payne, in thys power is the kynge cheffe and fulle ruler alle other by minysters and servants as S Paule, dothe declare saynge, lett every Soulle be subject and obedient unto thehye powers."[1]

This process of law enforcement, which maintained internal order, fell to the temporal power, as the clergy were to be more concerned with a man's spirituality than with his earthly concerns. This was a godly and righteous division of power, by which the people of God were to be ruled.

When Henry assumed power over the English church in 1534, the reformers battle to establish the Christian state in England was far from won. Between 1534 and 1539 Henry added a number of new laws to the statute books, none of which contributed to the reformers idealised picture of the Christian state. The new acts dealt mainly with the questions of the Kings Supremacy and clerical wealth. They touched briefly upon the more practical issues of church reform, but failed to remedy a majority of the most prominent abuses.

1 Robert Barnes 'op cit' Oviii^{V}

Henry's ambivalence towards the ideas of reform considerably slowed down, and prevented an onslaught of sudden change. This is perhaps partially due to Henry's motives for desiring a break with Rome. His refusal to sanction further initial change within the church is, perhaps, indicative of the view that ultimately his support for the new theology was less a result of his own religious sentiments than the fruit of political necessity. Having once achieved his political aims, Henry was reluctant to further advance the fortunes of a cause that might well result in civil unrest and ultimately an uprising against King and nobility.

Henry could be forgiven for fearing that the new teaching, which placed the scriptures in the hands of the ordinary people, would bring chaos to his land. He already had example enough in the teaching of the radicals and peasant unrest in Germany.

Justification by faith, the kingdom of God, and the freedom of man, were all open to misinterpretation. Theoretically sound they might be, but in practice they could pose a very real threat to princely power. For if by justification Christians were set free from the law, if they were answerable only to God, then what place was there for them in a earthly kingdom with earthly laws. And if the laws of a kingdom seemed out

of keeping with those of God, should not they and those who perpetuated them be discarded for the good of Gods kingdom.

Time and time again the early reformers found themselves in a situation where they needed to reassure nervous princes, for whom a spiritual opinion threatened to become a troublesome reality. They were acutely aware of the very real need to reassure Henry VIII that the new teaching of the Reformation posed no threat to the continuance of an ordered state or the exercise of temporal power. It was partially to meet this need, and partially to leave the laity in no doubt concerning their relationship to the temporal powers, that the reformers devoted some time in the exposition of the questions surrounding Christians and the temporal law. Fish's conclusion, similar to that of Luther[1], was that all Christians should place themselves in due subjection to the temporal powers, for such is the purpose of God.

> "The wordes whereby we knowe that the secular power is institute of God be these of Saint Paule unto the romans where he saieth. Every soule

1 Martin Luther - <u>Friendly admonition to peace concerning the twelve articles of the Swabian Peasants</u> 1525

shall be subject unto the highe powers, for there is no power but of God. Then he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinaunces of God."[1]

Thus those who believed that by their faith they were freed from the demands of civil law, had misunderstood the true nature of Christian freedom. Whilst they dwelt in the world they were subject to the laws of the earthly kingdom. Readers were advised that the law was not simply imposed upon them by unjust and tyrannical men, but that it was an integral part of God's organisation for men on earth.

The law was not only portrayed as a useful, but rather as an essential component of world order.

"For the worlde is all gyven to synne and starcely can they abide good Christens. They are not all Christen, that are baptised and called Christen."[2]

Only in a truly Christian world could the law ever become obsolete, since all its statutes would be superseded by God's law, willingly obeyed by God's people

1 Simon Fish - Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Nvii^{r}

2 'ibid' Oiii^{r}

However, this was the ideal and not the actual, and despite the fact that many went by the name Christian, in the case of all but a few, they were Christian by name only.

> "All they that be not yet Christen belong unto the kingdome of the worlde and be under the lawe. In this nombre all are evill Christen which seke nought elles but all worldly pleasure and are called Christen but they are not so."[1]

By drawing such a distinction between nominal and actual Christians, Fish followed the teaching of Luther, which in its turn owes much to the Augustinian[2] definition of the two cities, where good and bad alike must live together whilst God's kingdom is still in a stage of transition. Behind the guise of a Christian may hide an individual who places little value upon, or little observes the teachings of Christ. Since this situation will prevail until the full consummation of the Kingdom, then of necessity so must the temporal law.

1 'ibid' Oii^{r}

2 St. Augustine - The City of God Book 5 Chapter 21

> "Seyng then that there be so fewe good Christens and so many evill people, god hath given unto the same evill out of the Christen a state, and out of his kingdome an other regyment and governaunce and hath put them under the sworde that is to sey under the secular power and evyll ryght to thintent that they may not accoplisshe theyre malic when they wolde."[1]

The function allocated to the temporal ruler was that of maintaining order and protecting the weak and faithful, who are always the minority. Without the law the earthly kingdom could not continue, for the majority would turn away from God's law, obeying their own evil instincts. Only the temporal powers could prevent this from becoming a reality, and it was with this scenario in mind that the reformers firmly stated their belief that God had given the king power over all people, Christian and non-Christian alike.

> "For this cause hath god ordyned these is governments. The spirituall, the which maketh Christen and good persones by the holy gost under the king of that kingdome Jesus Christ. And thy secular governaunce the whiche constreyneth the

1 'ibid' Oii^{r}

evell parsones to keepe outward peace, and to be tame ageynst theyr will."[1]

Obedience to the temporal authority extended into all areas, including that of war and taxation. A number of reformers paid close attention to the question of Christian involvement in war, whilst Simon Fish additionally singled out the question of taxation for further comment. Appropriately by doing so, he answered the objections that some of the more radical reforming elements held towards the payment of tithes and taxes to King and clergy. Fish argued that since all Christians are subject to the temporal jurisdiction of the secular lord, they were all required to pay to him the appropriate amount of taxation towards the maintenance of the commonwealth. He criticised all those who believed that by so doing they were in some way depriving God of that which truly belongs to him. He believed that they had confused the functions of the two estates whereas in reality the payment of taxes to the king was a temporal matter alone, devoid of any spiritual considerations.

"For the service that ye do unto youre Prince ys not hurtfull unto youre helth. It can but merely

1 'ibid' Pvi^{r}

hurt or greve your body and temporall goodes if per case ye dyd paye unto heyn any taxes or subsidies, when they had no need to requiyre it."[1]

Tyndale too saw taxation as a possible cause of dissension, from the principles of Christian obedience. He found it worthy of note, in the advice he offered to the king, as regards his temporal duty. If Henry was to be a truly Christian prince, then Tyndale advised him: "execute thine office with such affections, with such compassion and sorrow of heart, as thou wouldest cut off thine own arm to save the rest of the body."[2]. Christians, of course, were given no excuses for disobeying the temporal power. However, in the realm the temporal power also had a duty to behave responsibly towards his subjects, and to refrain from abusing that power entrusted to him by God.

Although all the reformers are in agreement with the unquestionable need for the Christian to obey the temporal powers in all matters pertaining to the good of the commonwealth, there is, however, some dissension on the extent to which they should be equally willing to obey the commands of an evil prince. Here, then

1 'ibid' Pvi^{r}

2 Tyndale - Exposition of Matheu V, VI, and VII

lies a challenge to the absolute power of the King. Barnes, Brinkelow and Turner were all agreed, that where the commands of a prince were contrary to the word of God, Christians should only obey them in as far as their conscience permitted. There is here, however, no threat to the continuance of sovereign rule, for the type of disobedience advocated was passive and not active. The tone of the reformers was still conciliatory, and Christians were prohibited from involving themselves in civil war or civil unrest.

> "Never ye lesse yf he comande yt any thinge agest ryght or do yt any wrog [As for example cast ye in preson wrongfully] yt thou canste by oy rezasonable and quiet menys, without sedyssion, insurrecion, or breking of the comen peace save thyselfe or avoyd his tyrany thou mayst do it with good consuens."[1]

The Christian subject could only withhold his obedience on an individual basis, failing the possibility of agreement between the Christian's conscience and the King's laws. They were, however, also to be prepared to meekly accept the consequences of their actions, even if this meant death.

1 Barnes 'op cit' P^r

"They shalle kepe their testament with all other ordinances of Christ and lett the kyng exercise his tyranny (if they can not flye) and in no wisse under the payne of damnacio shall they withstonde him with violence, but suffer paciently all the tyranny that he layet on then, boothe in theyr boddys and goodes, ad leve the vengance of it unto their hevynly father which hathe a scorge to tame those bedlams with whane he seyth his tyme."[1]

Only Turner was prepared to go as far as to condemn an evil king as a representative of the devil, instead of as the head of God's church. Even he did not advocate a programme of civil disobedience. For whilst the King could not be head of Christ's mystical body the church, there could be no question of his rights as head of the church in England.

"He is supreme hede of the churche of Englande and Ireland if ye understand by thys worde churche and outwarde gathering together of men and women in polytike order."[2]

1 Barnes 'op cit' Piii^{r}

2 William Turner - The rescuynge of the Romishe Fox Hanse Hitprik [Really C. Mylius Bonn] 1545 p Cii^{v}

In an imperfect world it was inevitable that clashes would occur between Christian ideals and the practicality of running a Christian State. One such example was the dilemma facing Christians with regard to their use of the law.

Although primarily the true Christian is subject solely to the laws of God, in the scriptures, the reformers were eager to make it clear that it was not only possible, but perfectly correct, for the true Christian to submit to the secular law. This, however, was not to say that the Christian should have recourse to use the law on his own behalf, since he should gladly suffer all wrongs for Christ's sake. Despite this duty to Christ, the Christian was also seen as having a second duty also, this time to his neighbour. The Christian was therefore obliged to use the law where it would clearly be profitable, not primarily for him, but rather for his neighbour.

> "Touching unto the and unto thy welth, thou holdest thy silf and govemest thy silfe after the gospell, thou suffrest injurye and lyke a true Christen doest not resist the evill. Touching thy neyghbour, hys welth, thou holdest and governest thy silf after the ordre of love and doest resist the injurye which is done unto him, whyche the

gospell doth not forbydde but rather commaundeth it."[1]

Yet a further example of disagreement can be found between the prohibition placed on Christians against the taking of life, and the need of the prince to defend his realm in a time of war. Certain of the reformed sects forbade Christians to partake in any act of war declared by a prince. These sects were also present in England. In 1538 the Anabaptist movement had gathered enough support and momentum in England to provoke Henry into issuing a proclamation condemning their sect. The Anabaptist threat was obliterated in less than four months, resulting in the deaths of only a handful of Dutchmen.

The orthodox reformers hastened to reassure Henry that the new doctrines would do nothing which would allow harm to come to his country, by a refusal to resist the attacks of a belligerent power. They variously justify the Christian's responsibility to become involved in a war, either through the need to obey the prince, or by subjecting the cause and process of war to certain conditions.

1 Simon Fish - Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Ovii[V]

The former is most clearly set forward in Tyndale's An Exposition of Matthew v, vi, vii. Here he partially resolved the dilemma by distinguishing between the individual act of violence, and the violence of the state as a corporate whole. In the first place, Tyndale condemned all violence as non-Christian. It was the duty of the individual Christian to suffer rather than retaliate. However, the situation was completely changed when the violence was to be done in accordance with the king's command, in order to avenge some wrong.

> "If thy lorde or pr$\bar{y}$ce send thee a warfare to another lande, thou must obeye Gods comaundement and goo and advenge thy princes quarell which thou knowest not but that it is right."[1]

Tyndale continued his advice by reminding his readers that the enemy too had been redeemed by Christ's blood, and should be treated accordingly. The war, he states was only acceptable in so far as those involved "desire nether their life or goodes save to advenge thy princes

1 William Tyndale - An Exposition of Matthew V, Vi, Vii John Grapheus Antwerp 1532 p Gvi^{r} [Exposition]

quarell and to bringe then undre thy princes power."[1]

In actuality he was merely reasserting his own allegiance to the already accepted grounds on which Christians may become involved in a war. By setting conditions and limitations on the war he was simply reasserting the theory of a just war, which was first set down by Thomas Aquinas, and universally adopted as the basis for a Christian war.

The author of The Sum was quick to point out that a war between Christians is always against the teaching of God.

> "For it is a thing evill agreeing that the honde fight agenst the hede. so it is a thing as evell agreing and grete sinne that one christen warre ageinst the other. For we are all brethren and members of one body, the body of Christ whiche in all his life preached peace in and concorde to all them that he taught."2

However, he also concedes that at times war was a

1 William Tyndale - Exposition Gvi^{r}

2 Simon Fish - Sum of holye Scripture 'op cit' Pviii^{r}

necessary occurrence, and that it is indeed part of the prince's duty to defend his subjects. Hooper also agreed with him in this matter. War was only acceptable providing that its motives were pure, and all other means of reconciliation had proved inadequate. Ultimately the declaration of war is the prince's responsibility, and therefore the prince had to be sure that his motives for so doing were acceptable to God.

> "that he do it not to revenge his own wronge, or for to enlarge his lande and lordeship, but onely to defende his subjectes. And so may he use the horrible bussiness of the warre charitably and Christenly."[1]

In 1546, William Turner[2] accused the English bishops of making the King's authority dependent upon the continuance of certain laws and ceremonies which emanated from Rome. He saw in the failure of the bishops to completely abolish the statutes of the Canon Laws in England, a deliberate conspiracy to ensure that in reality the King remained dependent upon the See of Rome, despite the outward manifestations of freedom.

1 'ibid' Pviii^{v}

2 Turner Rescynge 'op cit' Bi^{v}

> "You gyve me occasion to gather of you that ye meae that the kyng is supreme guverner of all hys sucietes and all hys, are under hys autorite alon, by the papis ceremonies and traditiones ... he must be sayn to set sum of the popis ceremonies to help the scripture which were not able to do it alone."[1]

Turner continued to accuse the bishops led by Stephen Gardiner of conspiring to limit Henry's power. For by saying that the canon law was necessary for the continuance of a well ordered commonwealth, they were in reality saying that the king's power itself was dependent upon the canon law. The only remedy was the removal of all the remaining traces of canon law from the statute books of England. However, just how much freedom did the reformers themselves permit to Henry, as the supreme ruler of both church and state?

True, Henry was no longer obliged to abide by the statutes of Canon law, but this obligation had been replaced with another. The King was to abide by and enforce God's laws as they were embodied in the scriptures, laws which would be subject to interpretation and practical application, presumably

1 'ibid'

under the direct hand of the reformers themselves. In this sense they freed the King from papal power only to subject his rule to their own statutes. However, there was one very real and important difference. The reformers never claimed for themselves the right or the power to create or depose kings. They therefore lacked any means of enforcing their will upon the King, unlike the Pope who could always use his powers of excommunication or deposition to deal with particularly recalcitrant offenders.

The reformers sought to portray the church as posing a very real threat to the continuing authority of the English monarchy. Simon Fish[1] saw this process as being carried out in a two fold manner: Firstly; he claimed that the clergy "exempt themselves from the obedience, and dignitie, from your grace unto them." This is no doubt an exaggeration on the part of Fish, but to a small group of onlookers, ecclesiastical policy undoubtedly at times appeared to take on this form. Fish used this ambiguity as the basis from which to warn Henry against the politics of the clergy, which he believed was directed towards the end that "All your subjects shulde fall ynto disobedience and rebellion ageinst your grace and be unders theym."[2]

1 Simon Fish - <u>supplication</u> 'op cit' Dii[r]

2 'ibid' Dii

The early Protestants would have found a ready basis for their accusations against the church within the very law of the church itself, particularly in those statutes which dealt with the legal deposition of a rightful king. According to the hierocratic principles of the church, all the power and rights of government originated with Christ himself, and were translated to the temporal rulers via Christ's vicar on earth. This gave the See of Peter the final right to pronounce on all matters concerning the temporal powers of earthly princes. To govern was to enjoy an honour and a privilege granted by Christ's representative on earth, and a king could be deposed whenever it was felt that he failed to govern for the well being of the body politic. In theory this meant that a people were justified in rising against a tyrannical ruler in order that they might re-establish, the righteous rule of God. However, in practice a prince was liable to deposition mainly as a consequence of his disobedience to Rome's authority[1].

1 Walter Ullmann - The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages London 1965 p 301. "Deposition was the consequence of the king's uselessness. He was no longer useful because as a consequence of his disobedience to papal orders, he did not execute justitia laid down by the pope. He was to be deprived of his title deed to rule"

Much of the history of the English church had been one of the struggle between the church and the state to gain authority over each other. The reformers did not have to look far for examples of the abuse of papal powers. Simon Fish chose to remind Henry of the case of King John as evidence that rightful kings could be illegally deposed by the command of the church.

Deposition was not the only tool by which the church could bring to an end the reign of a prince. Excommunication proved to be equally effective. Such a sentence delivered upon any individual to all intents and purposes isolated him from membership of the Societas Christiana. In the case of a prince this meant in reality that he was no longer able to carry out the functions of government, and thus in effect it was tantamount to deposition. As the most practical form of discipline in the hands of the clergy it was more likely to be employed against a monarch, than an order of deposition. The reformers were confronted with the task of reassuring Henry that the clergy had no right to exercise either the powers of excommunication or deposition. To diminish the power of the clergy over the king, they had to prove that the clerical role had only a spiritual and not a temporal dimension, and that by their continuing wealth and power they posed a dangerous threat to both King and state.

Much bitterness was caused by the claims of the ecclesiastical hierarchy to clerical immunity from the legal jurisdiction of the crown. This can be clearly seen in Fish's statement:

> "Ye who is abill to nombre the greate and brode bottomless ocean see full of the cuilles that this mischevious and sinful generacion may lawfully bring uppon us unponisshed."[1]

The reformers saw clerical immunity as a great barrier which prevented the true reform of the church, by protecting the clergy from prosecution in a civil court. They realised that if the church was to undergo any real process of reform, it was first necessary that the prerogative of clerical immunity was banished from the English church. Therefore, for the sake of reform, the church and its increasing wealth is protrayed as part of a more sinister part of ecclesiastical policy. The continuance of clerical power was seen as a direct threat to Henry's reign and the stability of England. Clerical claims to legal immunity and inalienable wealth, were held to be the basis from which the clergy would eventually totally usurp the power of the King to the extent that the spiritual Kingdom would erase all

1 Simon Fish - Supplication D iii^{v}

memory of, or obedience to the king.

> "Your crowne ys close above sygnifying that inerth ys there no other superiour powe yt belongeth to England now where wyll my lordes the bisshops come into this crowne yff they come under they must thriste our youre graces hed for ye crowne ys to lyttle for bothe youre heades. Yff they come above so breke they the closseness of youre crowne and lye also in youre graces necke signifiyng that they will oppresse your grace."[2]

Simon Fish paid great attention to the question of clerical wealth. He used the church's continual accumulation of wealth through tithes and land grants, as evidence of the accumulative threat, that Henry would eventually be forced to acknowledge. Fish sought to convince Henry, that his best land and the wealth of his country was gradually being sapped by the church. The independence of the monarchy, which was dependent upon the monarchs wealth was gradually being drained, to such an extent that the state would soon be bound in servitude to the will of the church.

Writing in 1529, Simon Fish, used a polemical style

1 Robert Barnes 'op cit' B^{r}

designed above all else to gain the support of the King for the Protestant cause. He played upon the political considerations of the court, in the hope that once material reform had been enacted, doctrinal reform would follow to take up its important place in the new reformed and established church. The programme of reform he advocated, was dependent upon the initial overthrow of papal authority and the subjection of the church to the temporal authority.

Looking at the effects of church policy in practical terms, its serious effects could be gauged by two manifestations of national poverty. Firstly; by the lack of support proffered by the people for the sick and the destitute, and secondly; the perhaps more dangerous situation in which the people found difficulty in meeting the taxation needs of the nation.

> "Is it any merveille that the taxes, fisteries and subside that your grace most tenderly of great compassion hath taken among your people to defend them from the threatened ruine of their commonwealth have been so sloughtfully ye painfully levied."[1]

Any such threat was dangerous to national security upon

1 Simon Fish Supplication 'op cit' Di[V]

two levels. The inability of a country to meet its financial needs, seriously inhibited its potential to defend already acquired territories or to expand yet further. Henry was reminded that of all the nations which had risen to power by their military prowess not one of them had been subjected to the heavy financial demands of the church. His attention was drawn to such examples as the Roman, Greek and Turkish Empires, all of which had attained great power free from the financial tyranny of Rome.

In addition to posing an external threat to the authority of the king, difficulty in the payment of taxation could produce the much more dangerous threat of internal rebellion against what the people saw as a tyrannical and oppressive ruler. Tyndale aware of this advised Henry: "concernynge thyselffe oppreste not thy subjectes with rent, fynes or custome at all nether pille them with taxes ans soche like to maintene thine owne lustes: But be lowynge ad kynde to them as Christ was to the."[1]

Fish would have Henry believe that in such cases of rebellion the church would be quick to proffer its support to the rebels, particularly where the case in

1 William Tyndale <u>Exposition</u> Giv[v]

question applied directly to a matter of ecclesiastical concern. The issue of financial payment to Rome was one such case. Ultimately, Fish, like the other reformers, realised that the issue of church reform was more than the acceptance of an alternative theology, but dependent upon the outcome of a power struggle between the temporal and the spiritual rulers. The financial basis was just one of the many by which he hoped to persuade Henry to engage in a struggle against the authority of the established church.

Given that Henry accepted the proposition that his 'moost nobill realme wrongfully ... hath stood tributory (not unto any temeporall princes, but to a cruell devilisshe bloudsupper dranke in the bloude of the sayntes and maters of Christ)".. How was he to seek rememdy for this situation?

The reformers conceded that the fight would be a hard one. The exact state of the power struggle was all too apparent from the examples of the past. The claims of the church were firmly embodied in both the canon law and the traditions of the nation. The clergy were unlikely to give up without a struggle. This much at least was apparent from previous clashes between church and state.

"For dyd not dyvers of your noble progenitours seynge theyre crown and dignite runne ynto ruyne and to be thus craftely translated ynto the handes of this myschevious generacyon make dyvers statutes for the reformaycon therof, among which the statutes of mortmayne was one? to the intent that after that tyme they shulde have no more gyven unto them. But whate avayled it? Have they not gotten ynto theyre handes more londes sins then eny duke yn Yngland have, the statute not withstanding."[1]

In many aspects the possibility of reform, appeared to be nearly impossible. The bishops, abbots and priors all had an active role to play in parliament. Additionally many of the King's counsellors were in agreement with the church. As late as 1546 William Turner claimed that he could still find amongst the members of the clergy, many who still paid allegiance to Rome, chief amongst them Stephen Gardiner

"I can gather in your booke ye mean that then was he dryven out or ellis never, when he was first no more suffered to be called supreme hede of the churche in Englande. But after that tyme I will prove you, that he was in Englande, thefore is he

1 Simon Fish - Supplication Dv[r]

not dryven out at all. There was a certayn yong foxes found in England, certayn in your howse, and certayn in other bisshoppes howses whom we call papistes, of whiche sum ran away, and sum was taken and wold not deny theyr father till they dyede."[1]

The reformers commonly complained that, whenever, the church or one of its members was threatened by the law, or the possibility of being charged for certain crimes, the accuser was automatically charged with heresy, in order to prevent him from presenting his case in church. The situation as it stood seemed hopeless, since it seemed impossible to solve the problems of ecclesiastical wealth and clerical corruption by the application of the statutes of the land.

"Agayne let any man but ones speake agenst theye cloked ypocrysye or reve so lyttle a thynge that longeth to them whych shulde hyndre theyr abhomynacyons and there can no scripture, no plac no in actershype nor excusue in the worlde save but they must eyther to open shame or cruell deeth."[2]

1 William Turner Rescuynge Bvii^{v}

2 Robert Barnes 'op cit' Aiii^{r}

The only solution seemed to lie in the direct intervention of the King, to deprive the clergy of their political power, and their accumulated wealth. The reformers believed that it was the duty of the king, as God's leader to bring about this reform for the good of the commonwealth.

> "How can youre grace otherwyse be discharged except you set other men in their romes, that will doo those thynges, that belongeth by holy scripture to bysshops to doo. There outcommith their name why shulde they not also be bound to lyve therafter."[1]

The reformers, then looked towards Henry to instigate the necessary processes of reform. However, Henry's ambivalence towards the reform movement itself, ensured that there was never really any chance of establishing that type of Christian State, envisaged by men who had been impressed and inspired by their observations on the continent. The 1534 Act of Supremacy freed Henry from the only force which could restrain his power, and he truly became the autocratic monarch, answerable only to God. Henry retained this autocratic status throughout his reign, refusing to relinquish any part

1 'ibid' B^{V}

of it to reforming influences within the church.

He carefully supervised the progress of the reformation in England, limiting change with his own brand of conservatism. The legislation of the 1530's reflects the aims and extent of Henry's reforming policy. A majority of the acts dealt with ensuring clerical submission, the annexation of church wealth, and the recognition of the Act of Succession. Those which dealt with theological or practical reform where conservative and limited in terms of actual change.

The doctrine of temporal superiority, which was to have resulted in the rapid advancement of reforming practices, under the aegis of the king, was little more than a dream. Henry cautiously instigated reform, but his vision of the state church, was different to that of the reformers, who had been much influenced by the continental reformation. Their vision was one of the ideal state, where church and temporal power worked together in the establishment and maintenance of the Christian commonwealth.

The Ten Articles of 1536 showed just how far Henry was prepared to travel along the path of Lutheranism, and must have proved a disappointment both to the reforming party at court and to those still exiled on the Continent. The reformers who had expected so much of

Henry, were to be further disappointed three years later when in 1539 Parliament passed the Act of Six Articles. The Act with its reassertion of the doctrine of transubstantiation, private masses, auricular confession, and clerical celibacy arrested the progress of the reformation, and brought the king and the reformers into continual conflict for the remainder of Henry's reign.

True reform was only to progress rapidly in the short reign of Henry's son Edward, when power fell into the hands of a sympathetic nobility. However, Henry's Act of Supremacy freed the English crown to pursue the course of reform, if not religiously then at least in so far as it found it politically expedient and desirable.

II THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

> "Good frute maketh not the tree good, nor evell frute the evell tree, but a good tree bereth good frute and an evell tre, evell frute. A good man cannot do evell workes nor an evell man good workes, for a good tre cannot bere evell frute nor an evell tre good frute. A man is good ere he do good workes, and evell ere he do evell workes, for the tre is good ere it bere good frute and evell ere it bere evell frute. verye man is eyther good or evell."[1]

One of the most serious criticisms levelled against the new Protestant theology was that it removed the need for good works in any context, and that by its doctrine of justification it took away any incentive that a man might have to work for the good of his neighbours.

This, however, was a misrepresentation of the reforming ideas, for although they belittled the status of good works in the state of pre-justification they strongly advocated the need for good works after the act of

1 Patrick Hamilton 'op cit' Bv[r]

justification. Additionally they believed that God had provided the Christian with both a code of life and the means by which to observe it, through the joint work of the word and the spirit. This was the Christian's infallible guide to how God expected him to live, and as such it took prominence over the laws of man, and in cases of conflict gave the Christians the only basis upon which they could disobey the secular authorities.

> "But myne opinun unto all the world that scripture soly and the Apostles churche is to be folowyd and no mans authorite."[1]

Of those early Protestants who wrote in the English vernacular it is possible to discern two traits of thought on this issue. Some chose to give very positive moral guidelines to the Christian community, telling them how best to live in conformity with Gods law. The other group laid more emphasis on the development of that ethical code, with its derivation in the love of God.

Amongst this latter group few chose to specify the true characteristics of the Christian, remaining instead content in the belief that as the individual progressed through the process of sanctification, they would

1 'ibid' Bvi[r]

increase in the Christian virtues.

> "An man that hath perfect lowe to God seketh with all diligence to knowe they thynges wherin God hath pleasure. And when he knowed the wyll of god, there mo nothynge holde hym from the doinge of it."[1]

This emphasis on the Christian's total obedience to God's law through his love for God alone, resulted in the development of a degree of perfectionism, the true Christian embodying in his life the highest of Christian virtues. Such a perfectionism is advocated in Johnstones Comfortable Exhortation, where peace, love, patience, and self denial are advocated as appropriate Christian virtues. Thus the reformers believed that God's love spilt over from the act of justification to permeate the whole life of the Christian community. Faith and not works was made the ultimate reality in the Christian society. It alone was the beginning and end of God's kingdom, which lay beyond the knowledge of man's sinful nature.

1 John Johnstone - A comfortable exhortation of our mooste Holy Christen faith unto the Christen Bretherne in Scotland. - J Hoochstraten Antwerp 1536 Dii^{v}

"faith cometh of ye worde of god, hope cometh of faith, and cherite springeth of them both. Faith beleveth ye worde, hope trusteth after its promised by the worde, cherite doth good unto her neyghboure throw the love that it hath to God and gladnes that is with in her selfe.
Faith loketh to god and his worde, hope loketh unto his gifte and rewarde, cherite taketh on her neyghboure with a glad hart, and yt without anye respecte of rewarde."[1]

In this the reformers followed the Lutheran view that faith results in good works, which are acceptable to God, because they have been purified through love and the work of the spirit.

The Christian was to look to the word of God for the all important guidelines he was to observe in his new life. In practical terms this meant that all Christians should have both open access to the scriptures, and the necessary knowledge to profit from their presence and teaching. Thus the call for the introduction of the scriptures in the vernacular became one of the hall marks of reforming thought. The emphasis placed upon the right of all to have access to

1 Patrick Hamilton 'op cit' Biv^{r}

the English Bible, is well attested by the numbers who suffered the loss of their goods or life because they were found to be in possession of the scripture in the vernacular.

Additional weight was given to the argument in favour of universal access to the scriptures, by the fact that a majority of the English reformers chose to follow the Zwinglian view of reform, elevating the scriptures to the position of the final authority in all matters of faith, ethics, and ecclesiastical policy. Furthermore they were content to leave the scriptures to effect such a change in the will of the individual, that the resultant change in the individual's life, and the perception of God's righteous demands, would result in spontaneous demands for reform.

However, whilst this demand was forthcoming in many of the smaller centres of Swiss reform, it never really gained momentum amongst the people of England, who were often reluctant to see the introduction of reforming ideas. This was particularly true of the more conservative and isolated areas of the country, where pockets of resistance remained in existence, long after the Henrician break with the Roman Church. The ordinary people in these areas were reluctant to concede to any change which would have any real effect on their practical piety, or outlaw the associated superstitions

which had developed, from the uncorrected misunderstandings of the church's teaching, two such examples being the worship of images, and the mysterious powers allocated to the elements of the mass.

This passive attitude towards reform is also witnessed by the general lack of iconoclastic activity amongst the ordinary people of England, where in contrast their European contemporaries made the removal of idols one of the primary concerns.

The overwhelming concern with Biblical morality and the authority of the scriptures, arose out of the reformers desire to emmulate the practices of the early church. They believed the most perfect manifestation of the Christian community had been embodied in the life of the early church. However, whilst Brinkelow advocated that the church should use its wealth upon the poor, and Hooper spoke of the need to use wealth responsibly, none suggested that it was any longer realistically possible that the early church could be emulated in its totality. For whilst all accepted that everyone was equal before God in soteriological terms, the reformers did nothing which could be seen as a direct challenge to the established social structure. They also uniformly failed to apply the gospel in terms of the need for social justice or social reform, Brinkelow's

Brinkelow's 'Cōplaint of Rodericke Mor'[1] being the one exception. Published in 1548 it bears a greater resemblance to the Lollard writings of two centuries before, than it does to the early reforming tracts.

In contrast the mainstream reformers preferred to support the contemporary social structure, relying upon God to redress all ills in the after life. This was somewhat due to their tendency to regard their involvement in the world and its affairs in the partially detached manner, which owed not a little to their certainty of salvation and confidence of reward in the future Kingdom of God.

Additionally they were well aware, that if they were to secure the very necessary support of Henry VIII, they would need first to assure him, that the protestant cause held no threat to his power, or to the maintenance of order in the country. Therefore, they emphasised the need for obedience to the temporal powers in all matters, except perhaps those of faith, where the will of the temporal power was obviously in a position of serious conflict with the will of God.

1 Henry Brinkelow - The Cōplaint of Rodericke Mor for the redress of certeyn wicked laws. London 1548 - Links the gospel with social reform.

Here the individual soul became of paramount importance, and disobedience was advocated, if no alternatives could be found. Although the disobedience was of a personal and individual nature, often resulting in the individual's death, mass or practical physical opposition was neither advocated nor condoned. Hence whilst the death of a Christian, who refused to obey the temporal power and recant, was perfectly acceptable, and in fact commendable, any attempt to establish God's Kingdom by force, was only worthy of the strongest condemnation. By offering his life for his faith the individual merely made the ultimate sacrifice for his new found love of God. His escape from sin and his reward in heaven, were often both dependent upon this final act of defiance.

> "Soffre and receave gladly wits boute any murmure whatsoever trouble, payne, vexacion and adversite that God send. And this pacience commeth of perfect lowe which commeth of stronge and sure faith ... We are called to dye with Christ ye we may lyve with hym and to suffre with hym that we maye regne with him. We are called unto a kyngdome that must be wanne with suffering only, as a seke man winneth health."[1]

1 John Johnstone'op cit' Diii^{r}

The spread and success of the reforming doctrine was to a large extent dependent upon the dissemination of printed literature and the preaching of God's word. This accounts for the great emphasis which they placed on the need for a well educated clergy and a well instructed laity. For the reformers believed that it was only when the errors of the established church were made clear by the rod of Scripture, that the ordinary people would look for reform. Once measured against the righteousness of the scripture, the ordinary people would realise the falsity of its doctrines, and the full extent to which the Christian religion had suffered from its corruption of God's truth. This the reformers claimed was the real reason why the established church deprived the people of access to the scriptures, it was not as the officials claimed because the ordinary people would misunderstand the word of God, but rather because the word of God would open their eyes to the deceptions of the church, and thus, result in a spontaneous demand for reform. The refusal of the church to change its attitude, and make the scriptures available to the people resulted in strong criticism on the part of the reformers, who then sought to give their readers a practical guide, for the observance of the Christian life.

First and foremost of course this consisted of the need to make provision for universal access to the

scriptures, that they might be read and interpreted by God's elect. The reformers realised that the best way to disseminate reforming ideas was amongst those who were members of a small community with strong and permanent links with the other members, in order that their development in faith might be one of continual discovery both of God and self. Naturally these conditions were most likely to be found in the family organisation, and it was to the head of the family, that Hooper allocated the responsibility of ensuring the spiritual development of the entire household, family and servant alike. In the same way as the temporal Lord had a spiritual responsibility for all his subjects, the head of the household was answerable unto God for the spiritual welfare of its occupants.

> "He shuld cause his familie and chyldren to rede some part of the Bible for their erudituion to know god. Likewyce he shuld constrayne them to pray unto god, for the promotion of his holy word and for the preservacion of the governers of the communewealthe, so that no day shuld passe witheout prayer , and augmentacion of knowledge in the religion of Christ."[1]

1 John Hooper - Declaration of Christ 'op cit' D^{V}

The works of both Fish[1] and Hooper[2] provide fine examples of two writers who choose to give detailed guidance, to the means by which full realisation could be given to their Christian belief, in their everyday pattern of life. Thus these two belong to the second group of reformers, namely those who concerned themselves with the practicalities of the Christian life.

Proportionally these reformers are very few in comparison with those who emphasised a voluntary change in a man's lifestyle, which emanated from the ever increasing understanding of God. The publication of such works had been far more popular in the environment of the Swiss cities, where it was more realistic to demand conformity, of a relatively small population. Circumstances in England did not really militate in favour of such schemes of reform. After all the reformation under the reign of Henry VIII had been largely limited to the questions of authority and finance, with little change elsewhere. There had been no real attempts made to encourage the individualisation of religion to the extent that it was demanded by the reformers, and the vernacular version

1 Simon Fish - Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit'

2 John Hooper - Ten Commandments 'op cit'

of the Bible had only been authorised towards the end of his reign. Thus the reformers' aspirations for universal access to the scriptures had remained as little more than a dream.

It was only with the accession of Edward VI that Protestant sympathisers gained any real power, and the opportunity for far reaching reform became a reality. Hence in 1550 Bucer, had been encouraged to write a book outlining the best means via which the state could translate the Christian ideals into an enforceable system of private and social discipline. His resultant work De regno Christi[1] was published just before his death on 1551. Its effect upon society however, was extremely limited in immediate terms. Edward himself died in 1553 and was succeeded by his sister Mary, who was determined to fully restore the Roman Catholic Church in England.

Some of Bucers ideas bore a strong similarity to those which had been expounded in the earlier works of Fish, Hooper and Solme, although these reformers envisaged the family as the medium through which reform would take place. They too had been greatly influenced by the examples of reform as it was embodied on the continent. Additionally, in the case of 'The Sum', its intended audience lay not in England, but rather in the Low

1 Martin Bucer - De regno Christi 1551

Countries, Simon Fish enjoying only the status of translator not author. The English environment was not really conducive to the implementation of such ideas. Even in the reign of Edward there was a continual shortage of preachers, and a reluctance amongst many to adopt reforming principles. Furthermore, much depended upon the standard of literacy amongst the people, and no real provision had as yet been made to ensure the increase of literacy amongst the population.

The reformers found at least some measure of success in the abandonment of monasticism as the most perfect expression of the Christian life. In this area at least their aspirations were met by Henry's reforming legislation.

The practices of monasticism received strong condemnation from the reformers on a number of counts. The author of The Sum of Holye Scripture had found the issue of such importance, that he had readily allocated a large part of the second half of his work to its refutation.

Amongst reforming circles monasteries were often the subject of a severe and scathing attack because of the conjectured lifestyle of the religious orders. Monks were not condemned for their desire to follow the scriptures, imitate the life of Christ, or preach the

Gospel, but rather for their lack of vocation, as by the sixteenth century many of those in the monastic orders, had joined for impure motives. Monks were seen as aspiring to wealth or power, or as created from the younger sons of the nobility for whom there were neither sufficient lands or provisions within the temporal world. Generally the monastic ideal was held to have turned sour, its roots lying deep in deceipt and empty ceremonialism.

Even in this condemnation of monasticism there was really no common ground amongst the reformers' beliefs. For example whilst in his own work, '<u>The Supplication for Beggars</u>', Simon Fish attacked the monastery on the grounds of immorality, in a similar vein to the Lollards, he was equally content to put his name to the translation of a work which partially condoned the ideals of monasticism, holding the rule of St. Benedict to be particularly admirable.

> "In tymes passed there were no holyer pesones then monkes. And all they that wold lyve according to the gospell were want to gyve themsilves unto that lyfe bycause they had a more greater occasyon and help to lede a good lyfe, then with theym of the world. A parsone mought better kepe his simplicite, chastyte, sobryete, humylyte and other vertues in such assemble of holy parsones then he

could do among the seculars and worldly which sought but things carnall so was then the lyfe of monkes the fontaygne of Christendom."[1]

Although the author goes on to attack contemporary monasticism, on the grounds that none now observe the rule of Benedict this support for the monastic ideal is remarkable in itself, since the basis of the monastic life denied the most fundamental of all the Protestant beliefs. As the monks obeyed the rule in the hope of gaining their salvation, it became necessary to qualify this acceptance of the monastic ideal, in order to defend the doctrine of justification. Hence the document goes on to specify the shortcomings of monasticism, as due to a failure to comprehend the true glory of God's message of salvation, with an over-reliance on good works and empty ceremonies. Monasticism could only truly come into its own when its adherents had already been the subjects of justification, and simply chose this as a way of dedicating their lives to the service of God through the service of mankind.

1 Simon Fish - Sum of Holye Scripture 'op cit' Hvii^{r}

Monasticism then was the inevitable casualty of the radical re-orientation of soteriology away from its focus on the works of man, in order that it might be centred on the saving grace of God. Sadly the reformers were so intent upon heightening the people's awareness of its abuses, they overlooked its more positive aspects. When Henry dissolved the monasteries between the years 1536 and 1540, their disappearance left a great social need unfilled. The poor who had depended upon the charity of the monks, found themselves destitute under the power of their new landlords, and to them it seemed that the only people to benefit from the entire affair were the temporal lords. Additionally monks who had renounced their vows, often found themselves without the skills or resources to survive. Of course such practical considerations were of secondary importance when set against the word of God. Furthermore, the reformers calls for monastic dissolution, were just one part of a coherent plan for the Christian society. Had this society evolved as they had anticipated, then all would have worked in unison for the good of their neighbour. As it was , in actuality the monasteries were dissolved for reasons of finance, and the Reformation was never far enough advanced to introduce the type of perfect Christian society envisaged by the reformers. Ideas which had come to fruition in the European city states were to a great extent unsuitable, for the larger and more greatly

diversified population of England, or for a state where reforming ideas came not from the people, but rather were imposed from above by an autocratic power.

If the claims of monasticism were berated in contrast the life of the Christian within the community was highly commended, as a faithful manifestation of how God desired his people to live.

> "In all the worlde there is not a more Christian life, nethermore accordaunt unto the Gospell, then is the life of the comune cyteuns or householder whiche by the laboure of their hands and in the swete of thyere visage get theyre brede and expences."[1]

This latter group of English Protestants were remarkable in that they linked theological reform with the practicalities of the common life. Since this Christian Life was to be lived through willing obedience to God and not through the imposition of any laws, the refomers placed a great emphasis on the need for all to receive a proper knowledge of the tenets of their faith. Once in possession of this doctrinal truth they expected even the common man to be able to

1 'ibid' Miv^{r}

carry out whatever actions this truth required, thus limiting the need for the temporal powers to prohibit that which was unacceptable to God. Aware that they could not rely upon the legislative support of Henry's government, the reformers sought to place the initiative for reform elsewhere, eventually they were to place this responsibility with the head of the family household.

Consequently, much emphasis was placed upon the enforcement of God's law as it was embodied in the ten commandments. The institution of marriage and the family were upheld, whilst adultery and filial disobedience were strictly forbidden. Parents were charged with teaching their children the words and meanings of confessional prayers, particularly the Paternoster which enjoyed a place of prime importance amongst all other devotions.

> "Also ye shalle not that every man is bound to brynge up his chyldrene in lernyn of sum good doctryne wherby they may knowe God and with sum manuall worke or occupacion, whereby they may gett theyre lyvunge with the swett of theyre face. And bycause every master owt to bringe up theyr chyldren accordynge to the fathers wyll, therfore in this comaundement is the master bound to instructe his discipyl or servante well and

accordyng to God comaundemete whos duty is showd in meny places of scripture."[1]

In theory, some of the reformers, particularly those who took their lead from the Swiss reform movement would have liked to see the church take full responsibility for the development of the Christian Life, particularly as it embodied a powerful force for reform through its offices or preaching, teaching the word, and administering the sacrament. In actuality they knew that such a programme of radical reform would be too demanding in the English situation,and if they dreamed of recreating the Strasbourg reform in England, in actuality they had to temper their demands, to fit in with Henry's own plans and limitations for the church. Therefore they emphasised the idea of Christian unity, and the brotherhood of all Christians as the one body of Christ. When considering how to act those who were members of this one body, had the added concern of needing to act responsibly towards both God and their fellow men.

The reformers high expectations of the application of Christian responsibility ultimately resulted in inevitable demands for perfectionism in every act and thought. Consequently the reformers were prone to

1 Thomas Solme 'op cit' Dviiii^{V}

extend the application of Christian standards to all aspects of life, even where this involved a complete re-orientation of social expectation at least as far as practical standards were concerned. Already in 1529 'The Sum' shows signs of the seeds of early puritanism, an aspect of religion which was further developed by Hooper in his 1548 work. 'The Ten Commandments'. Here Christian standards are extended to dress as well as personal relationships within the family unit. In this newly created and perfect Christian society, the elect were warned about the seriousness of sinful thoughts let alone actual deeds.

Christianity of course did not stop here but was also extended into the realm of personal possessions, where the wealthy under the threat of damnation were advised of the best ways in which they could righteously employ their wealth. The author of 'The Sum' believed that the rich were particular at risk, and therefore he singled them out for special attention.

> "Therefore let the riche take hede theyr richesse be not theire everlasting life, and that they have not another thīg after their deth. As had the riche of whome speaketh out the saviour in the gospel."[1]

1 Simon Fish - Sum of Holy Scripture. Niii[v]

Wealth in itself was not seen as evil, only wealth which was badly used. There was no suggestion that all possessions should be given away, only that they should be used for the good of the whole community, and not in the setting up of images. Possessions were seen as gifts from God, which carried with them a liability to help the poor. Here the reformers sought to reflect the community spirit of the early church, but at the same time they placed their teaching on a more realistic level, making each individual the sole agent in the responsible distribution of his wealth amongst the needy.

> "Oh london I saye yf ye wolde redresse these thinges as ye be bounde, and sorowe for the poore, so shulde ye be without the clamor of them, which also crieth unto God agaynst you, and which he will heareth, and then where as now ye have a houndreth extreme poore people, shall not be one, and in so doinge your owne goodes shall not be a witness agaynst you at the greate day of the Lorde."[1]

2 Henry Brinkelow - Lamentation of a Christian against the city of London. Nurenbergh [S. Mierdman - Antwerep] 1545 Bvi[r]

Brinkelow's work is unusual in that he firmly links religion with practical social reform, in a work which may have caused alarm amongst Henry's advisers, in view of the peasants revolt in Germany.

The reformers also closely followed Luther's teaching on the issue of Christian vocation. United as the one body of Christ and observing all the commandments each individual was seen as having an essential part to play in the proper functioning of the Christian society. In this sense they further upheld the present ordering and stability of society, since all were encouraged to be content in their station, certain in the knowledge that God had allocated each his own vocation. This applied equally to a man's wealth as to his occupation.

Thus the reformers did not advocate temporal equality or the redistribution of wealth. Neither, did they seek to change the social structure. Christianity and the Christian life were seen as an acceptable and already elementary part of temporal society. There was no expectation that there would be any occurrence of a rapid change, since this would have been unacceptable in its temporal consequences. The reformers, did not set out to achieve a social revolution, but a re-vitalisation of the Christian faith with its inherent implications for both, individual lives and society as a whole. In a truly Christian state of course, change

was inevitable. For as God changed the hearts of men, re-orientating them to a life in the righteousness of the Gospel, it was inevitable that this would result in a change, first amongst individual groups, and later amongst the community.

Such a change, of course carried with it serious implications for patterns of worship , both ecclesiastical and personal. It was inevitable that many of the practices of the established church would be abandoned in favour of the extension of a more individualistic religion. This was not to be based on ceremonies but on a firm knowledge of God's words, enacted in every day life. For this reformation the reformers turned both to Henry and to the ordinary people. In the latter they were more in line with Zwingli than with Luther, since they saw the revivification of faith as creating a demand for reform amongst the ordinary people. Thus, to some extent, certain of the English reformers saw the power to change the church as emanating from the bottom and not from the top, at least in terms of the demand for change. At the same time they wanted to avoid all suspicion of revolution, and, therefore, they emphasised the need for Henry to instigate, a well planned and co-ordinated reform of the church.

III SOME EXAMPLES OF EARLY C16th PRAYER GUIDES

> "Prestes do mumble, and rore out theyr dyrges and masses in church and church yardes for theyr founders, curyous to speake their wordes dystinctlye, but I ensure then yn their prayers shall do them no good, but only acceptocion divina ...That men with suche a devocyon that God might accept them, and not so ydylly and with out all devocyon be vyll, and say theyre diriges, allenly of bondage and of custom and not of devocyon."[1]

This wrote Robert Barnes in 1531, with reference to the practice of prayer in the established church. On this issue he had the sympathies of many of his fellow reformers, who also saw in the worship of both the church, and the common people little more than a collection of empty ceremonies. They felt compelled to condemn such lip service paid to a God who demanded of his people total and absolute devotion, which sprang from the heart.

It would, however, be wrong to imagine that all

1 Robert Barnes 'op cit' Eii^{V}

sixteenth century religion had been reduced to empty ceremonies and vague superstitions. By the sixteenth century the quest for personal salvation had been heightened by religious developments, on the continent. In England as elsewhere the Church had failed to reform itself either doctrinally or through the medium of its worship. The cults of saints still remained paramount in the worship of the ordinary people. Relics and images were venerated as sources of power and protection, as was the host once consecrated by the hands of the priest. The church itself encouraged the perpetuation of such superstitions, and even went as far as to include certain rituals for the blessing of items, as well as people. All such rituals Thomas[1] records usually involved the presence of a priest, and the use of holy water, and the sign of the cross.

The Reformation was to sweep away much of the superstition connected with popular religion, but it needed to deal not only with practices but also with the underlying beliefs associated with them. This change was to be mainly achieved by discrediting images, and encouraging the people to study the vernacular Bible, that they might judge the validity of all beliefs by this measure.

1 Keith Thomas - Religion and the Decline of Magic

An additional way of weakening and finally abolishing this dependence on images was to re-educate the people, so that they recognised the need for a personal relationship with God. It was partly to this end that the reformers began to emphasize the need for personal prayer, and that this should be said in the vernacular.

Their task was much simplified by already existing practices in England. It had long been the Lollard habit to reject images and magical rites in favour of a more puritanical form of worship. Lollards too had promoted the use of the vernacular scriptures, along with the English version of the Creed and Paternoster. It was also their habit to learn such items of faith by rote, and to use them in their private devotions. Thus to this extent, the Foundations for the introduction of refoming ideas had already been laid.

Additionally, mystical forms of devotion had also had an important part to play, in the expression of English lay and clerical piety, and the works of Richard Rolle and Margery Kempe, were actively employed as guides by those who chose to find spiritual fulfillment in this way. Ordinary people were also encouraged to participate in contemplative activity by focusing their thoughts on a picture or the image of a saint. In this way they were encouraged to achieve a fuller participation in the teachings of their faith.

The passion stories of Christ had also been singled out as particularly worthy subjects of contemplation. It was believed that as the participant worked through the various stages of the passion sequence, he was brought to a greater understanding of God's vicarious act in Christ. Mysticism also provided a possible pathway to advance the spread of Protestant ideas, as it too placed a great emphasis on the need for an individual relationship with God. Thus the reformers were presented with a number of already existent modes, which they could utilise in their own attempts to provide an appealing form of practical piety.

The texts covering the subject of prayer can be divided into two categories: those primarily intended to instruct the reader in the practices of meditative contemplation, and those intended as teaching documents.

Of the two, the former follows the more traditional pattern of medieval and early modern prayer sequences. Emproweres '<u>Mystick Sweet Rosary</u>'[1] is faithfully representative of this type of literature. In it the

1 M. Emprowere - '<u>The mystick sweet Rosary of the faithful Soul</u>' - M de Keyser. Antwerp 1533 STC 21318

author seeks to utilise the mystical forms of popular piety in order to promote the spiritual advancement of his readers.

Published in Antwerp in 1533 at the press of Martin de Keyser, this little devotional work bears further witness to the diverse nature of early sixteenth century English works, printed on the Continent. The book comprises of fifty-five prints and prayers intended to focus the mind of its readers on events from the life of Christ, from his birth through to his ascension into heaven. Each print is followed by an explanation of its significance, and a related prayer of supplication. The fifty-five prints can further be divided into four larger sections, each of eleven parts, and following the pattern of the rosary. In each section the first print and prayer are followed by the Paternoster, whilst the remaining ten are concluded by the Ave Maria.

Based upon the divisions of the rosary, this work has an unusual format, for a work published abroad during this year. In many ways drawing as it does upon the already existing medieval tradition of using pictures to focus the mind on prayer, this work would have been as suitable as a guide to private devotion in the previous century as it was in 1533. Perhaps the fact

that it bears a strong similarity to a second work[1], also printed in Antwerp, over twenty years earlier, shows that works of practical piety were often treated with great suspicion by the church authorities.

Until recently this second work was also thought to have been published during the 1520's. In his article on English printing in the Low Countries, published in 1929, M.E. Kronenberg[2] identified the printer as one William Borterman of Antwerp, and pointed to this and the woodcuts as setting the date at about 1529. However, more recent scholarship holds that the work was published at a somewhat earlier date, the editors of the New Short Title Catalogue suggest a possible date of around 1510, but are unable to confirm this with absolute certainty. Therefore, both the exact date of publication,and the names of both its publisher and author remain unknown.

This work too has an identical format to that of Emproweres,consisting of four sections each containing ten prints, followed by a prayer of supplication, and concluded by an Ave Maria or Paternoster appropriately.

1 Here beginneth the Rosary of our lady in English. W Vorsterman STC date 1510 (probably 1525) STC 17544 [1510 Rosary]

2 Kronenberg 'op cit'

There is however, a major difference between the two for whereas the 1510 Rosary directs the petitions of the supplicant towards Mary "The most speciall mediatrice for man by whose merites and cotinuall supplicacion to the multitude of shynners shall be brought to salvacion,"[1] Emprowere's work directs his readers' prayers directly to Christ, who alongside God stands as the only subject of worship.

> "O lorde Jesus Chryste, I worship the, the whiche arete to come the iuye to gyve every man aftir his dedis, other paine or plesure. Graunt me most mercifull Jesus all my life to end aftir thy plesure, that my soule departing from my bodye may retourne unto the hyz maker, where withoute end it may loave the withe all thy sayntis."[2]

The mystical aspirations of the work are clearly set out in the introductory section, where its stated purpose, is summed up as being "that the inwarde mynde might savour the thinge that the outwarde eye beholdeth."[3]

1 1510 Rosary 'op cit' pg 38

2 Emprowere 'op cit' Gviii^{r}

3 'ibid' Aiv^{v}

The following sequence of prints and prayers sought to lead the reader through the various stages of meditation leading to a knowledge of God, to a point where the supplicant asks that God be made the one object of his affections.

> "Make my harte to be syk for thy love, make it to yoke all wouldely thingis onely to thirst and honger aftir the so fervently that nothinge els may make me glad and occupye my affections but the the onely O lorde my God."[1]

Emprowere's work follows the traditional pattern of Christian mysticism, with its desire for personal perfection. His is a personal love for a personal God, derived through a Christocentric mediation on the life of Christ.

It is through a developing sense of personal love for God incarnate in Christ, that the mystic reaches inner spiritual perfection, and final knowledge of Gods grace. Stage by stage he led his readers through the mystical sequence, and at each progressive stage brought them to a greater understanding of the grace of compunction.

1 'ibid' Gv^{r}

The sequence is typical of medieval mysticism, in that it sees prayer as a compunction in which the human heart naturally responds to the suffering of Christ. Each of the five wounds of Christ were made a natural focus for the contemplative. Beginning with the wound of the left foot, the individual, was gradually led along a path where he totally vested himself of both his sins, and the merits into the safe keeping of Christ, that he might at last come to that stage where he could truly pray.

> "Most amiable and swete Jesus for the wounde of thy herte be thou prased, and worshipped and glorified. Into this wounde I offer laie up and resigne unto my herte, al my stregthe affeccios deds of ententis desierīg the for the fussion of thy bloude and water to take me into thy onely possession and tuicion, and to knitte me wholl unto the in love."[1]

The work also shows clear evidence that the author sees Christian mysticism as a progression through the various stages of compunction, as he speaks not only as the sorrow of the individual for his own plight, but also his sorrow for the sins of others.

1 'ibid' Fvi[r]

"Power in my herte the zele of perfit love, that I maye wepe unfaynedly for to her mennis synnes as for my nowne, and fele my neighbours hurte as thoughe it wounded my nowne herte."[1]

The element of weeping is also present, both as a result of man's sense of his inadequacy and as a result of his fear of the coming judgement, to the extent that the supplicant acknowledges his helplessness and pleads with God.

"I beseche the graunte me faythfully to receyve thy mercy with continualli teares, that I derised from all synnis, maybe made moyste al togither withe the servent desyer and love of that lyfe everlasting."[2]

By encouraging the reader to contemplate the passion and sufferings of Christ, as a means of achieving spiritual purity, Emprowere was employing the same method, as that of the fourteenth century English mystic, Richard Rolle. He offered even the most unlearned, the opportunity to communicate directly with God, in a manner devoid of official ceremonies, and incomprehensible words.

1 'ibid' Cvii^{r}

2 'ibid' Cii^{r}

If images were accepted as the books of the poor, then mysticism of this sort, also had a part to play, in bringing the poor to a clearer understanding of Christ and his message, through a medium infinitely more accessible to them, than the Latin liturgy.

Through a preoccupation with the passion of Christ, and meditation upon his bodily sufferings, they too could be brought to a sense of self-inadequacy, and a knowledge of their own blame worthiness for the sufferings of Christ.

The prints, short texts, and suggested prayers, all served to create a sense of self involvement. they stimulated the reader's imagination, and focused their devotion away from the ceremonies of the Church, diverting it instead towards Christ. In this way even the most uneducated could become an active participant in the passion of Christ, developing a deeply individual love for a God who communicated with the individual in his own right, thus, the emphasis on the passion of Christ as the most laudable of meditative materials, and the supplicant's continual prayer to God that he will "Replenesshe all my sensis with the memoriall of thy passion, let it occupye all my thoughts that I no other thinge so fele nor

undestande."[1]

In many ways this form of practical piety was ideally suited to the aims and needs of the Reformation. It contained within its series of meditations, all of the important Protestant teaching: the realisation of guilt, the abandonment of self hope, and total dependence upon Christ's saving act as the means of salvation. To this extent Emprowere's work was suitable for use by Protestant and Catholic alike. This can be seen when he speaks of the significance of the wound of the left foot, in the following terms:

> "Into this wound I put al my synnes negligently done, and that bynde me to damnation, praying the not to reckon them, but to absolve me cofirmed with thy grace theyn to growe."[1]

However, despite the absence of prayers to Mary as the most important mediator, and the emphasis upon penitence and dependence upon God, the tract is from the pen of an orthodox Catholic author. This is perhaps best indicated, at the end of the work, where the author links faith and works, as the joint partners in man's salvation. That such a work was published

1 'ibid' Gi^{r}

1 'ibid' Bv^{r}

abroad, even before the break with Rome, is perhaps more indicative of the hostility of the church authorities, to such literature, than to its Protestant origins.

Methodologically, mysticism provided an excellent means of fostering, and spreading Protestant ideas, amongst the populace. In the first instance, because, it employed a mode of devotion which was already familiar to many of the ordinary people, namely, the idea of focusing their prayers upon an event in the life of Christ, and also the practice of employing visual stimuli to promote a greater understanding of the Christian faith.

By using the process of meditation upon the various stages of Christs life, the '<u>Mystic Sweet Rosary</u>', helped to focus the mind of its readers, upon the message of the New Testament. The efficacy of this method, in directing the devotions of the uneducated, was widely acknowledged in learned circles. The individual having once conjured up a picture of the salient events, was then enabled to fix this knowledge in his mind. Thus, it made learning easier and more effective, for those who would otherwise be left to glean what little knowledge they could from the priests exposition of the Scriptures.

Additionally, by its very nature, mysticism, emphasised the importance of the individual relationship between God and man, and this in itself was basic to the reformed theology. It also helped to destroy the belief that the clerical estate was in some sense superior to the laity, and hence it weakened the dependence of the laity upon the established church, for by its very essence it focused the mind on Christs saving act as central to salvation, removing the need for the correct observance of church ritual.

However, this sense of individualism which was its strongest point was also its weakest. Since the search for spiritual fulfillment through contemplative activity could often at its best prove to be anti-intellectual, and at its worst divisive, abnegating not only the need for the established church, but also the need to fulfil mans Christian duty both to his neighbour and society, the consequent effects of such abnegation were both totally against the spirit of the Reformation and also socially undesirable. Additionally mysticism could be misunderstood and seen as a way by which a man might earn his own salvation.

For these reasons, mysticism, was probably seen as more of a threat to the reformation than as an aid and as such it received only limited credence, as an acceptable form of devotion. Additionally even in the

very early English Protestant works[1] it is possible to detect signs of puritanism, a train of thought which would regard with suspicion anything which was ultimately dependent upon individual emotionalism. Disregarding this aspect of religious experience the early Protestants chose to emphasize the need for a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Bible.

Apart from its potential for divisiveness, mysticism also possessed two other inherent dangers. Firstly that the subjects of the pictures could become objects of veneration in themselves, rather than be regarded simply as exemplars of the Christian life. Secondly; its individualism left it open to the dangers of misinterpretation, and whereas the Protestants saw a man's duty as that of exercising proper responsibility towards his fellow man, the mystical mode consisted, all too often of denouncing all attachment to the world, a sentiment only too evident in Emproweres work when he prompts his readers to pray:

> "I beseche the so wounde my herte with the chaste love of the that it might yrke all woldly thingis and fele the theryn an inhabitour and pessorssour for ever."[2]

1 ie. John Hooper - A Declaration of Christ 'op cit'

2 J. Emprowere 'op cit' Aviii^{r}

Hence, mysticism was rejected as a vehicle of reform, whilst the scriptures were allocated an important role along with their key concepts of justification by faith and love of neighbour.

However, this does not mean that the place of prayer was in any sense belittled. Many who were dissatisfied with the efficacy of the existing forms of worship turned to personal prayer instead. Thus the reformers' emphasis on the individual's relationship with God, increased rather than decreased the need for adequate guides to prayer. Additionally, since prayers were commonly said to the saints there was a pressing need for the reformers to teach the ordinary people, both how to pray, and to whom they should direct their prayers. This resulted in the publication of a number of teaching works. One such example is Christen Pedersons tract, 'The Richt Way to the Kingdom of Heaven'. Translated by John Gau, and printed by Hoochstraten in 1533, it provides an interesting contrast with the work of Emprowere.

Pederson opens his work by first condemning the teachng set forth in a contemporary work the 'Garden of the Soul'. In its place he commended the Ten Commandments, Creed and Paternoster as the most important and informative sources of the Christian faith. He drew a stark contrast between these and the contemporary

prayer guides, which led the people away from the true path of prayer, though their teachings and associated superstitions.

> "They gaif sic vaine glorious tetels and namis and pouers that the quhilk red thaine everie day of buyt that tyme upone thaime shuld noth be slayne be that inimis na drunit na brint na be hangit nu shuld notht de ane evil or ane hastie deid na haif na troubil na powerte."[1]

In contrast he gave the Paternoster an exalted position as both a prayer and a teaching document. The Paternoster "lerīs all man quhow thay sal desire and get yat some help with ane invert and ane faithful prayer to god." It also provides the people with a guide to that faith "quilte is the grace and mercie of god" which "heilis the spiritual seiknes of the soul."[2]

Having established the importance of these three works as part of the Christian tradition the author continued with a careful exposition of the three texts.

A second work published five years later in 1538 has a

1 Christian Pederson 'op cit' Aii^{v}

2 'ibid' Avi^{r}

similar format to Gau's work. The book "Certaine Prayers and Godly Meditacyons"[1], bears the colophon "Printed for J Petersen". Its author however remains unknown. In all probability it emanated from the press of either H. Peterson or Van Middleburch.

The work is interesting in that it combines both teaching and contemplative materials into one volume. Having first, given a detailed exposition of the three texts, the author then turns his attention to the passion of Christ. In a section headed 'A frutefull rememberance of Christs passion' he included a series of meditative exercises, which followed the Passion sequence and directed the reader to a realisation of his own inadequacy before God. In comparison with the earlier work of Emprowere it presents a far more practical view of Christian devotion. Meditation was seen as the means by which true Christians may "expresse in theyre lyfe or manners, the name and lyfe of Christe."[2] The author also insisted on the need for a practical expression of faith, and thus, avoided the possible misunderstanding whereby, meditation replaced

1 Certaine Prayers and Godly Meditacyons for J. Peterson Marlborow [Probably Antwerp - H. Peterson or Van Middleburch] 1538

2 'ibid' Niii^{v}

the more practical aspects of Christian belief. Pederson warned his readers that true faith , expressed itself in actual deeds. It is not "ynough that we countre fayte him in oure outwarde behaveoure ad wordes, but we must do oure endeveraunce perfeytlye to expryse hys passion in all owre awe convesaycon from the botom of oure hartes."[1]

By combining the teaching of the Ten Commandments, Creed and Paternoster, with the idea of contemplative prayer the author successfully eliminated, one of the worst failings of contemplative meditation. He managed to maintain the idea of the whole church as the body of Christ with its inter-related parts. This unity he saw as so complete that he could write "We are of one body. Whatsoever, another sufferyth I suffer, and whate so ever benefyte is done to an other it is done to me."[2]

The author was also aware of the criticism that mysticism may diminish a man's reliance upon God in favour of reliance upon his own self achievement. To counteract this he advocated that his readers remained ever mindful of their own weaknesses whilst they

1 'ibid' Niii^{v}

2 'ibid' Lv^{r}

meditated upon the passion of Christ. For, only then would such an exercise be profitable. The type of meditation he advocated was far removed from that of the past, which he dismissed as unprofitable because, its practicioners "staike badlye unto theire owne power and natural ymaginaciōs nether ones desired the grace of god, and so coulde theirs atayne to profyte."[1]

In this way the author managed to fully utilise already existing practices, whilst at the same time refusing to compromise any of the main principles of reform. The ordinary people of England, were already familiar with the idea of contemplation, both upon the passion of Christ and upon the lives of the saints. The uneducated who could extract information from paintings and statues, could also be trained to glean important doctrines from the petitions of the Lord's prayer and the Creed.

Since the Protestant religion placed so much emphasis upon the response of the individual to God's offer of salvation, it now became essential that all people received instructions on how to pray. The demands of open access to the vernacular versions of basic Christian texts, was of course not unique to the

1 'ibid' Mvi^{r}

reformers. Their Lollard predecessors had often been accused of heresy, on the grounds that they said the 'Lords Prayer' in their native language. The three texts were seen as forming the core of Christian belief.

> "It was never ordeyned without the singular providence of God that the multitude of Christen shulde lerene be herte the tenne commaundementes, the credo, and the paternoster. For truely he that understondeth these hath the pythe of all those thynges, whiche holy scripture doth conteyne oz what so ever may be taught necessary unto the Christen."[1]

In both the above work and that of Pederson, the Creed, Commandments and Paternoster are all expounded at length for the benefit of the faithful. Vernacular texts of this nature played an important role in the dissemination of Protestant ideas. By instructing the ordinary people in the rudiments of their faith, and by thus encouraging them to contemplate the meanings and implication of the texts the authors sought to bring their readers to a realisation both of their own self inadequacy, and of the significance of Christs saving act.

1 'ibid' Ciii^{r}

It is possible that by the time these two works were published the use of these three texts had become a widely accepted teaching mode, and that both Pederson, and the author of the 'Godly meditations' were simply putting into print what was already accepted practice. Certainly, this would account for the strong similarities in wording and textual layout[1], particularly in the opening paragraphs. The similarities may point to the prior existence of a teaching formula which was by this time in common usage by Protestant groups and their preachers. The later individualities of both works, would discount plagiarism on the part of the author of 'The godly meditaiton' or the use of a commonly held document.

If this is the case then the use of such teaching modes was obviously considered to be an important and effective method in the dissemination of Protestant ideas, in a time of prohibited preaching, and persecution. Forbidden to preach or to distribute the Protestant scriptures the early reformers needed to find other ways by which to spread their beliefs.

1 Christen Pederson. 'op cit' Av^{r}

see next page

1 Christen Pederson. 'op cit' Av[r]

The Richt Vay to the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Thir are thre thingis quhilk are neidful to al man to ondestand to the salvatione of the soul, first to onderstand quaht they shuld do and that be one dune, secudlie quhair thay cane noth du oz lat be ane dune of thair own struith as thay suld, to seik and find help quhair with thay ma du or lathe one dune the thing quhilk they ma not of thair owne stirngth. Thridlie to onderstand quhou and quhair thay sal thus help seik ad find, slilik as it is neidful"

Certain prayers and godly meditaitons 'op cit' Ciii[v]

"Three thinges there are necessary to be knowen to obteyne eternall lyfe ... The Fyrst is that thou knowe whate is expedient to be done,and whate to be undone. The seconde, when thou perceavest taht thou of thy nowne strength canst nether do, nether yet avoyde that,which thou art bounde to do, or to eschewe that then thou knowe of whome to seke fynde and recyve this strength. The thyrde is howe thou shuldest seke, and obteyne it."

Since, the extension of Protestantism in England was largely dependent upon the growth of biblical knowledge amongst the ordinary people. The Protestant doctrine had to be seen as applicable to both the spiritual and secular lives of the people. By making prayer a necessary part of the individuals religious obligations the ordinary people were at the same time, both educated and involved in the reformed religion.

Additionally since the spread of Protestant ideas depended to a large extent upon their propagation in the home, these books were particulaly suited to the contemporary circumstances. With their help the head of the household would be able not only to increase the knowledge of his household, but also to examine their knowledge using these books as his guide.

The emphasis on private prayer and the expansion of the peoples knowledge through the words of wandering preachers and printed works, provided the framework for the spread of reforming ideas. By encouraging the people to participate more actively in the worship of God a serious challenge was issued to the established church. By emphasising the need for constant private prayer the traditional role of the Saints was seriously undermined. Additionally this emphasis, belittled the status of images and the importance of church ceremonies.

Devotional literature for use in practical piety, possibly had a greater influence on the general populace, at least in terms of productiveness than any of the other reforming literature. By the sixteenth century many wanted to know more about their beliefs and to be more involved in the religious process. Those who were largely discontent with the contemporary format of worship, would perhaps have more readily welcomed devotional works than straight theological teaching, as many of them lacked the background needed to comprehend the subtleties of the theological arguments.

SECTION D

THE SACRAMENTS

I THE LORDS SUPPER

> "We therefore, John, the Bishop aforesaid, not willing that thou who art wicked, shouldest become more wicked, and infect the lords flock with thy heresy, which we are greatly afraid of, do judge thee and definitively condemn thee, the said John Frith, thy demerits and faults being aggrivated through thy damnable obstinancy, as guilty of most detestable heresies, and as an obstinate impenitent sinner, refusing penitently to return to the lap and unity of the holy mother church."[1]

John Frith was burnt at Smithfield, on July 4th 1533, for his refusal to recant two articles condemned as heretical by a common assembly of bishops in London. He had been questioned on his denial of both purgatory and the doctrine of transubstantiation. Both were sufficient to condemn him, but it was only the latter which received a specific mention in the sentence

1 The sentence against John Frith 1533 - Foxe 'op cit' Vol V p 15

delivered against him.[1]

Frith's denial of purgatory along with his opinion of the sacrament, could both easily have their roots in the Lollard tradition of England, as in the Protestant traditions of Europe. The charges levelled against Frith had frequently been brought against others on earlier occasions.

However, despite the existence of well established and important traditions on the interpretation of the sacraments, many of the earlier writers chose to remain strangely silent on this issue. The question of transubstantiation is rarely raised in the works of the late 1520's and early 1530's, and even where it is mentioned the subject is rarely dwelt on for any length of time. Many, for example Simon Fish, simply chose to avoid the subject altogether.

1 'ibid' Vol V p 15 - "We do find that thou hast taught, holden, and affirmed, and obstinately defended, divers errors and heresies, and damnable opinions, contrary to the doctrines and determination of the holy church, and especially against the reverend sacrament."

Such omissions are unlikely to be due to unintentional oversight or to lack of an opinion on the subject, and can perhaps be more readily explained by a desire to win royal approval for the ideas of the Reformation. Accordingly many of the earlier works emphasise the ways in which their ideas might benefit the kingdom, rather than on divisive issues. Thus for reformers, such as Fish, writing so close to the Marburg Colloquy, it perhaps seemed better to remain silent on an issue of theological controversy which might be seen as posing a threat to the unity and stability of Henry's Kingdom.

However, by 1540 the situation had changed, and the Act of Six Articles passed by Henry's parliament of April 1539, prompted many of the reformers, still living in exile, to write detailed tracts in defence of their opinions on the sacraments. The provisions of the Act restated the doctrine of transubstantiation, the efficacy of private masses for both the living and the dead, and the administering of the elements to the laity in one kind only. The Act was seen as a great

1 Simon Fish - The Sum of Holye Scripture - Gives a concise expression of all the major tenets of the Protestant faith, with the exception of the Lord's Supper.

setback to the Protestant cause, and prompted Foxe to dismiss it with the words "it be worthy of no memory amongst Christian men, but rather deserved to be burnt in perpetual oblivion."[1] Contemporaries of the Act saw it as yet further evidence of the hold which Rome still had over the Church of England, and accordingly set out to remedy any misconceptions on this issue.

In England from July 1539 it was forbidden on the pain of death to deny or preach against the doctrine of transubstantiation. This meant that the exiles now accorded the issue a prominent position in many of the tracts being published in Germany and the Low Countries. Many of the exiled reformers chose to resist all thoughts of compromise with Henry's church, insisting on the administration of communion in both kinds, and the belief that the service was one of remembrance and not renewed sacrifice.

Some, however, like Frith chose the way of compromise and reconciliation. Taking neither extreme, but instead maintaining that Christ was truly present in the sacrament in some mystical form. Hence the issue that had divided Protestants in Europe, was to leave its mark on the English Reformation also.

1 Foxe 'op cit' Vol V p 262.

The Confession of Augsburg, written by Melanchthon in 1530, became regarded as a statement of Lutheran beliefs. It clearly stated that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and distributed to those who partake in the sacrament, qualifying this by an open rejection of all who believed otherwise. John Frith[1], whilst agreeing with his Lutheran contemporaries on other important doctrines chose to dissent from them upon this issue, following rather the teachings of Zwingli than those of Luther, as throughout his writings he maintains that Christ is mystically present in the sacraments to all those who receive them through faith.

Thus when Frith speaks of the presence of Christ in the elements he is speaking not of a physical change but of spiritual change perceptible only to the faith of the believer

> "It doth much profyte to be slayne for our redemption and eaten through fayth. Which thynge we maye do, although hys natural flesh be not in the sacramente."[2]

1 John Frith - An answere to M.Mores letter 'op cit'

2 John Frith 'ibid' Hiii[r]

In this he is following more the writings of Oecolampadius and Zwingli, rather than those of Luther, as he neither totally denies or totally affirms the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Indeed, when challenged by More, that he was simply teaching the views of the condemned heretic Luther, he denied not only that he relied upon Luther, but also that he had embraced the ideas of any save himself.

> "Likewise I do not allow this thinge because Wickliffe, Oecolampadious, Tyndale and Zwingli so saye, but because I see them in that place more purely expounde the scripture, and that the process of the text doth more favour their sentence."[1]

Additionally, Frith chose to draw heavily upon the writings of the fathers, in order to add authenticity to his words. He cites heavily from the works of Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, Bede and Chrysostom to show that the elements of the sacrament are merely signs of the thing they represent, and not the thing itself.

He also gives great credence to the Pauline concepts of 1 Corinthians, where the congregation are described as

1 John Frith 'ibid' Bvii^{r}

the one body of Christ. This emphasis is also found in the works of Oecolampadius and Martin Bucer. Paul, Frith points out, speaks of the believers coming together to form the one body of Christ. The Body of which Paul speaks is the mystical body of Christ. He does not mean that it is made up of the natural body of the believers.

> "The Sacrament of the aultar is owre bodye as well as it is Christes bodye, and even if it is owre bodye, so is it Christes But there is no man that can saye that it is our natuarall bodye indeed, but onely a fygure, signe, memoriall of owre bodye wherefore it must also follow, that it is but only a figure, signe, memoriall, or representation of Christes bodye."[1]

The means by which Frith conceives of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament is also clear from his treatment of Christ's words, that those who eat and drink of the elements dwell in Christ and vice versa. Reason, claims Firth, shows that this can only be understood in a spiritual sense. If it was understood otherwise then it would mean that Christ even dwelt in the unbeliever, and the unbeliever in him, which Frith maintains is not possible.

1 'ibid' Evi^{V}

The sacrament then is eaten on two levels, the physical and the spiritual, and whilst the former feeds the flesh, the latter feeds the soul. Thus on this issue Frith can conclude:

> "This is the very eat of Christ to dwell in him, and to have him dwelling in us. So that whosoever dwelleth in Christ [that is to say] beleveth that he is of God to save us from our synnes doth verely eate and drinke his body and bloude, although he never received the sacrament. This is ye spirytuall eating necessary for all yt shalbe saved. For there is no man ye commeth to God withouyt this eating of Christ yt is the belevinge in him."[1]

In comparison to Frith when Luther speaks of the real presence of Christ in the sacrament, he is not merely speaking of a spiritual but an actual eating of Christ in the elements. There is no indication that Frith ever held this belief, and so his denial of More's acccusation that he has taken his ideas from Luther is accurate. However, his equal repudiation of Zwingli's possible influence can hardly be upheld, in view of the similarity of ideas between the two, even to the point

1 John Frith 'ibid' p Cviii^{v}

of similarity of wording. Whatever the origins of his beliefs upon this matter, it seems that Frith, who strongly advocated tolerance of others opinions, has managed to retain both the belief in Christ's physical presence in the elements, and the idea that the supper acts as a remembrance of Christ's passion. Through a form of mystical sacramentarianism he upheld both the reverence and respect due to the elements for what they symbolise, whilst also freeing them from the belief that they were equally effective, whether or not the communicant received them in faith.

B SIGN OR SACRIFICE

In the decade immediately following the Act of the Six Articles, a number of the exiled Protestants turned their attention to the Lords supper. John Lambert being the main of the English reformers to publish a comprehensive discourse[1] on the issue in 1548. His work was complemented by the earlier work of Thomas Solme[2], in 1540, and the similar views advanced by Henry Brinkelow[3], John Hooper[4], and William Turner[5].

1 John Lambert - A treatyse ... concernyge his opinion of the sacrement of the aultre. Wesel Denk van der Straten 1548.

2 Thomas Solme - 'op cit'

3 Henry Brinkelow - The lamentation of a Christian against the city of London. Nurenbergh (s. Mierdman - Antwerp) 1545

4 John Hooper - A Declaration of Christ and The Ten Commandments 'op cit"

5 William Turner - The Huntyng and fynding out of the Romysche foxe - Basyl [S.Mierdman - Antwerp] 1543.

These early English reformers insisted that the sacraments fell within the bounds of a pre-formed definition. A definition not of their own making but inherited from the early church fathers. Namely that a sacrament is only such because it bears a similitude to the thing it represents.

In his work 'The Sacrament of the Aultre', John Lambert gives credence to his argument by citing passages from the 'Epistolae' of St. Augustine. By including long passages from these letters into his own discourse, Lambert has succeeded in giving weight of antiquity to his own opinion of the sacrament as a memorial sign of Christ's death for men's redemption. For he claimed, alongside Augustine, that it is essential to the nature of any Sacrament that it bears some likeness to the thing it represents, and that the object represented is not an actual component of the sacrament itself.

On this basis Lambert had no difficulty in acknowledging that the body and blood of Christ was in some measure present in the bread and wine of the sacrament. However the presence was purely one of remembrance which spiritually fed the souls of those who ate and drank in faith. Hence Lambert could conclude:

"I confesse and knowledge that the breade of the sacrament is truely Christes bodye and the wyne to be truly his bloude accordynge to the wordes of the instytatyon of the same sacrament. But in a certen wyse that is to write, fyguratively sacramentally or sygnyfycantyuely."[1]

On this issue the ideas of Lambert are sufficiently in harmony with those of St. Augustine for the former to use the ideas of the latter without change or commentary. However, the two part company when St. Augustine writes "Christ was once sacrificed in his own person, and yet he is mystically sacrificed for the peoples not only throughout the Easter festival, but everyday."[2] Lambert, along with a majority of the early reformers, totally denies that any such sacrifice could possibly take place during the celebration of the mass.

In full agreement with Lambert, John Hooper accused the church of abusing the sacrament by claiming that each time the bread and wine are consecrated, Jesus is once again sacrificed for the forgiveness of mankind.

1 John Lambert - 'op cit' Dvii^{v}

2 St. Augustine - Epistolae 98-9

"If they sacrifice Christ in the masse, let them hange hym tyrauntes agayne upon the crosse and thrust a spere into his blessid hart that they may shed his blud for without schedding of blud is no remission for the scripture damnyth this abuse of the Lordes supp, and is the conciliation of his precious blud."[1]

Refering to the writings of St. Paul, Hooper maintained that a sacrifice must by its very nature include the actual shedding of blood. Without this there can be by definition no sacrifice. These realist ideas also found expression in Brinkelow's Lamentacion of a Christian, where he speaks of the "abnominable massyngege, which is a blasphemy to Christes bloude, in that thy make of it a sacrifice. What sacrifice can that be where no bloude is shedde."[2]

This was not the only doctrine which he found to contravene the laws of logic. Brinkelow also accepted Augustine's definition of a sacrament as the visible sign of an invisible grace. However, he also maintained that when the Church insisted that Christ

1 John Hooper - Declaration of Christ 'op cit' Gvii^{r}

2 Henry Brinkelow - Lamentation 'op cit' Dvi^{v}

was newly sacrificed in the institution of the bread and wine, it invalidated the status of the Lord's Supper as a sacrament. For, if by the consecration of the bread and wine Christ was once again sacrificed and became corporally present in the elements, then the bread and wine could no longer be counted as a sacrament, which by definition represents something which is holier than itself. Therefore, if the elements after consecration were truly God, they could no longer be counted as sacraments, since nothing could be holier than God, who is already therein. Thus he concluded that God could not be newly sacrificed or corporally present in the sacrament of the mass.

> "If it be a sacrament as it is indede, then it is a sygne of some holier thinge then it selfe, so can it not be God, for what synge or token wilt though have holier the God. None. Ergo then it is not god himself but some sygne token or rememberence of some benefytle which we have through him."[1]

By their denial of the repeated sacrifice of Christ, the early reformers were in line with the teaching of Ratramnus of Corbie, who also held that Christ's

1 'ibid' Diiii^{r}

sacrificial death was unique and sufficient in this uniqueness.

> "We say that the lord is sacrificed when the sacraments of his passion are celebrated, although he was sacrificed as his own person for the salvation of the world once and for all, as the apostle says 'Christ suffered for you, leaving to you an example for you to follow in his footsteps. He does not say that daily he suffers in his own person what he did once and for all."[1]

Whilst the more rational and theologically concerned reformers turned to the antiquity of the fathers to give surety to their argument they could also draw strength from the knowledge that the conflict in which they found themselves, was not due to any novelty on either side. The arguments concerning the doctrine of transubstantiation were long standing ones. If Ratramnus had argued for remembrance only, his contemporary Radbert[2] had argued for sacrifice. The

1 Ratramnus of Corbie - Christs boedy and blood - library of Christian Classics Vol ix ed. G. McCraken. SCM. London p 129

2 Paschasius Radbetus of Corbie - The Lords Body and Blood. - 'op cit' Library of Christian Classics Vol ix

doubt had always been there, and universal belief in the sacrificial nature of the mass revolved around a decision made in the ninth century, in favour of one interpretation over another. The reformers too made their choice in accordance with that which they believed to be authenticated by the scriptures.

If Hooper, Brinkelow and Lambert present similar theological arguments to their European counterparts in the Swiss Confederate states, this is hardly surprising. Their interpretation of the elements along Zwinglian and not Lutheran lines is the product of careful deliberation, which led them at length to comment on an issue with which they had not sought to vex the English situation during the early years of the reform movement. Even then despite the delay in raising the issue they were still unable to present a unified opinion on this matter.

England too had its own unique contribution to make to Reformation theology, from the Lollards, to small clusters of Protestants who had in the early stages adopted foreign heretical and reforming ideas to their own purposes. Some of those in exile chose to fan the flames of this indigenous anti-clericalism, by polemical literature specifically designed to appeal to the ordinary people. In 1540 Thomas Solme chose to take just such a stance over the issue of Christ's

sacrifice in the mass. His book The Lords Flayle contains a vitriolic attack upon the cruel tyrants who were not satisfied with one sacrifice, but rather must seek a new sacrifice on a daily basis. Further to stir the indignation of the populace he added:

> "The popusche presthode do no use this sacrament as a remembraunce but as a thynge renewede and made agenne by theryre wordis and blyssyngis, and so ware the Juys dyd crucify him ons, they lyke cruell tyrantis do crucify hym dayly, and whare Judas (confessing his faulte) for a lytyll lukere dyd betray his blude, they unrepentaunt bycause they have grett vantege wyll ever be sellers and trayters to Christes blude."[1]

Hence disagreement over the issue of the one unique sacrifice, or the continual sacrifice of Christ in the mass, was spread by such polemical writers, from the field of theological debate, to become a contentious issue among ordinary people, who were dissatisfied with the state of the church and concerned for their own spiritual welfare.

1 Thomas Solme 'op cit' Bviii^{V}

C TRANSUBSTANTIATION OR REMEMBRANCE

Theological discussion over the Mass was not confined simply to defining exactly what happened at the moment of consecration, but was sufficiently wide to embrace further disagreement over the metaphysical state of the elements after consecration. There were three main interpretations prevalent amongst sixteenth century European theologians, in the Catholic and Protestant camps, for whilst the former maintained the established doctrine of Transubstantiation, the Protestants first rejected the official teaching of the church, and then failed to reach agreement over which interpretation to substitute in its place.

In Germany, Luther put forward the doctrine of Consubstantiation, in which he maintained that although the bread and the wine retained their natural substance after consecration, at the same time Christ became mystically and corporally present in the elements. In contrast the Swiss reformers Zwingli and Oecolampadius stated that they believed that the bread and wine remained simply that, and it was only in the faith of the believer that Christ became present. In England both interpretations were to find supporters, in an issue of such import, that it caused an irreparable

split between the German and the Swiss reformers after the Marburg Colloquy of 1529.

If Continental reformers were to exert a strong influence in this area, ideas were also forthcoming from England itself. As early as 1379 John Wyclif had challenged the doctrine of transubstantiation on the grounds of philosophical realism, and this denial of priestly power to transmute the elements of the mass found considerable support amongst members of the Lollard movement.

In view of this traditional opposition to the doctrine of Transubstantiation, Henry's decision to reaffirm both his and the Anglican Church's adherence to the doctrine must have been seen as a severe setback to the furtherance of the Reformation cause. The Six Articles of July 1539 with their reaffirmation of the Catholic doctrine was sufficient in itself to convince the reformers that the Pope still had great power in England, despite claims to the contrary. It seemed to them that if the King was head of the church it was in name only, since he and those in power showed an overwhelming reluctance to redefine doctrine, in addition to the power struggle of the church. Therefore, England's early Protestants set out to redress the balance. From the safety of the Continent they condemned the doctrine of transubstantiation on

several grounds ranging from the inability of the Priest to perform such a miracle, to realist philosophy which rejected the possibility of annihilating one substance in favour of another.

Writing in 1538 John Lambert called upon English Christians to reject the doctrine of transubstantiation on the grounds of their own reason. He employed the same argument as that used previously by Zwingli in his debate with Luther, namely, that as Christ had but one body and that this body of Christ now sat at the right hand of God, where it would remain until the second coming, it was impossible that the bread could also be the body of Christ.

> "Christ is so ascended bodily into heaven ... that is to say is with the father there remanet and resydent in glory, tht by the infallyble promyse of God, it shall not or cannot from thens returne byfore the generall dome, which shall be in the ende of the worlde. And as he is no more corporally in the worlde so can I not see how he can be corporally in the sacrament of hys holy supper."[1]

1 John Lambert 'op cit' Bi[r]

This much, Lambert claimed, was attested by the scriptures, and additionally supported by the dictates of reason, which would not allow for Christ's body to be present in two places at the one time.

Lambert's whole argument depended on the belief that the characteristics of Christ's earthly and risen body were essentially the same. Citing the writings of Augustine, Ambrose, Bede and Gregory he stated:

> "He testifyeth and teacheth the blessed body or fleshe of Christ to be no where els thā in heaven for to it beynge assumpt or ascended into heaven god as he sayeth hath geven immortalyte but not taken awaye nature. So that by the nature of that holy flesh or bodye it must occupye one place ... for if Christ shulde in hys hymanyte be everywhere dyffuded or spread abrode, so shuld hys bodyly nature or natuarall body be taken from hym."[1]

Thus in accordance with Lambert's argument the body of Christ must be present in one place alone. Those who asserted that Christ was also present in the sacramental bread and wine thus deprived him of the humanity which was an essential part of Christian

1 'ibid' Bvii^{r}

soteriology.

Whilst Lambert denied the possibility of Christ's bodily presence in the elements, he found no difficulty in allowing that Christ the Son of God was spiritually present in the world. For he clearly stated that although "for the measure of hys very body he must be in one place and that of heaven as concerynge his manhead and yet everywhere present in that he is the eternal Sone of God and egall to his father."[1]

He further adds concerning the sacramental elements themselves "I graũt the holy sacrament to be the very and naturall bodye of our saver, and his very naturall bloude. And that the naturall bodye and bloude of our saver is in the sacrament after a certyne wyse."[2]

This is not a betrayal of his earlier ideas but the result of believing that there is a firm distinction to be made between the qualities of the two parts of Christ's nature. Lambert chose to keep the two firmly apart, holding each to exist independently of the other, and cited both the scriptures and the doctors in support of his case.

1 'ibid' Bvii^{v}

2 'ibid' Cvii^{r}

"To this expocyson of the olde doctors am i enfored both by the artycles of my crede, and also by the circūstances of the seyd scripture, as after shall more largely appeare."[1]

Lambert also appealed to his reader's sense of reasoning, which he held would show that it was impossible that the body of Christ be both in the elements "corporally conteyned and receyved but also there reserved, kept and enclosed."[2] and additionally at the same time seated at the right hand of the father in heaven. Such a belief he held to be lacking in consistency, for how could Christ come in the future, when he was already here on earth in the form of the sacrament.

"And therfor can not the same naturall bodye naturally be here in the worlde or in the sacramet for ... It shuld be both to come and all redy come, whych is a contradycyon and varyant to the nature of hys manhede."[3]

1 'ibid' Dvii^{v}

2 'ibid' Cv^{r}

3 'ibid' Cvi^{v}

Lambert confined his attack on the doctrine of transubstantiation to the grounds of reason, and an appeal to the dictates of natural reason. He did not seek to attack the mass itself nor those who performed the ceremony. In contrast Thomas Solme, writing just a year later in 1540 linked the doctrine of transubstantiation directly with the evils of the mass and the blasphemy of those who performed it. His argument was advanced from an anti-clerical stance, and this was typical of a group of reformers whose intended audience lay amongst the ordinary people. Many of Solme's ideas were also echoed in the writings of others, for example Henry Brinkelow's 1545 publication 'The Lamentation of a Christen against the city of London'

Solme's and Brinkelow's use of anti-clericalism would have won them a sympathetic audience amongst many of the less learned members of England's population, who were already the heirs of Lollardy, with its refusal to allow that priestly power might transform the elements into more than just their natural substance. Thus when Brinkelow wrote of the elements as "The greatest idol under heaven" and as 'a God of the makynge of anti-Christ'[1], he was to a large extent merely re-stating the sentiments of an earlier generation.

1 Henry Brinkelow 'op cit' Avii^{V}

Both Brinkelow and Solme believed that through its teaching on the mass, the Church deliberately misled the people, bringing them to accept the teachings of the Antichrist, for they held that the 'masse is after his intstitucyon on heape of folish ceremonies without significacyons, to avaunce and sett out his god to the blearynge of the eyes of the simple"[1]. Without exception the exiles believed that church claims concerning the consecrated bread and wine were little more than blasphemy, and yet further evidence that the established church was only masquerading as the church of Christ. Additionally, no minister of the latter would ever claim for himself the power to create God from bread and wine.

> "They affirme to be and will make us beleve the bred and wynne to be changyd into the very fleshe and blud of Christ. They believe to blowe out the holy gaste owt of the fathers bosome, and the bryng with him the holl bodye of Christ borne of the virgyn and to consayve it agenne in the cake and wynne as he did in the virgyns womme. This is theyr fayth if thes wordis be spoken chefly with on brethe, but if they take two brethes then they

1 'ibid' Avii^{v}

er in doubte."[1]

Solme held that the priests had usurped God's place and reversed the natural order of creation, as they now claimed to re-create their own creator.

Additionally, he found it unacceptable that the efficacy of the sacrament should depend upon such triviality as the correct ordering of the ceremony. Equally he rejected the belief that once consecrated the elements could act 'ex opere operato' regardless of the worthiness of either priest or recipient, with its tendency to lead the ordinary people into false and superstitious beliefs in which they accorded to the consecrated elements the power of divine judgement.

It was John Wyclif who had first raised the cry, in England, against the church's claim that a priest could effectively bring about transubstantiation regardless of his own spiritual state. Solme took these doubts to their ultimate conclusion. Since it was the ritual, and not the spiritual state of the celebrant or the communicant, which was important, Solme concluded that the elements could be consecrated by Christian and non-Christian alike providing that the procedure was correct

1 Thomas Solme 'op cit' Bvii^{V}

"If an infydell shuld speke and blowe the words over the cake and wynne, shuld the wordis change them into the very body and blud of Christe. I thynke they would say nay, bycause they take faythe. And who is faythfull. Non truly but he which trust faythfully in the merits of Christes blude to inheryte hevenly blyssingis for Christs sake only."[1]

By acknowledging that the church required faith as a pre-requisite of effectively consecrating the elements, and by defining the faithful as those "which trust faythfully in the merits of Christes blude" Solme implied that no priest possessed such a faith since all "boste and affirme to make God and Christ in flesh and blude, without whom thow causte not lyve, move or be."[2]. Thus by their claims he held them to be guilty of blasphemy, against the eternal God who had no beginning and no end. Further reason clearly showed that the bread of the sacrament had both beginning and end, from the planting of the seed, to the decay of bread kept overlong. To claim that the elements were a part of the divinity was to claim that God could be made by man out of base materials which were subject to

1 'ibid' Bvii^{v}

2 'ibid' Bvii^{v}

destruction and decay.

> "The thynge which today is not shal be god tomoraugh and that thynge whych is withowte spryte, or lyfe, groynge in the fylde by kinde shalbe god another yere, whych God we confesse to be withowete beginnyng or endynge and in his manhede begotten not mad as scripture testifyth.[1]

In this view he found ready support from a number of his contemporaries, Henry Brinkelow and John Frith amongst them. Whilst the former simply appealed to his readers' sense of reason, the latter sought to support his theological argument by lengthy citations from the early fathers. This major difference in emphasis is indicative of the intended readership of these two works, with the work of the former being intended for the ordinary people, whilst that of the latter was initially intended as an answer to Sir Thomas More's attack on Friths earlier work '<u>A Christen Sentence</u>'[2].

Frith felt this treatise was lacking in its treatment

1 'ibid' Cii^{r}

2 John Frith - <u>A Christen Sentence and true judgement of the most honourable sacrament of Christs body and bloude</u> - Richard Wyer - London

of the need to eat Christ's body in a spiritual sense, and therefore, in order to remedy this he wrote a second work on the Lords Supper.[1]

In this later work the emphasis has moved away from that of a simple teaching document to that of a theological tract. In it Frith employs both reason and the tradition of the church itself, in order to defend his cause. Thus he seeks both to further inform his brethren and confute More's attack with the same work. By carefully selecting appropriate passages from the works of the fathers, Firth attempted to show that the reformers were the true heirs of tradition. To this end he freely used the works of Augustine, Ambrose, Bede and Chrysostom, along with that of respected clerics such as Pope Gelasius.

Additionally, whilst acknowledging his agreement with the German reformers, he was also eager to point out that his beliefs derived from his own reasoning. He denied the possibility that the substance of the bread and wine could be transmuted into the natural body and blood of Christ, because certain self-evident truths

1 John Frith - A Book made by J Frith. answering unto M Mores letter. Monster C Willems [really van Middelburch] 1533

proved that such transmutation was impossible. This is not the philosophical reasoning of Wyclif, but the theological reasoning of a teacher eager to bring enlightenment to his readers on an issue so central to their faith. So certain was Frith that it was only a lack of faith that could condemn a man, that when condemned to death, for his denial of transubstantiation, he was able to conclude:

> "I thincke many men wonder how I can dye in this article, seying that it is no necessary article of oure faythe, for I graunte they neyther yte is an article necessary to be beleavyd under payne of dampnacion, but leve yt as a thinge indifferent.[1]

In order to give credence to his argument Frith needed to look no further than the Old Testament to find examples of those, who even before the birth of Christ shared in the salvation he bought, simply because they had faith in God's promise. They too ate the body and drank the blood of Christ in the mystical confirmation of God's promise throughout the ages. Frith made no division between the covenant of the Old Testament and that of the New. He had no difficulty in accepting that the manna of the wilderness was equally as

1 John Frith - Articles 'op cit' Pvi[r]

beneficial to the faithful as was the contemporary bread of the Eucharist, and yet there was no cause to believe that the manna was changed into the natural body of Christ. This Frith took as yet further evidence that God would not deliver a man to damnation for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation.

> "And as that fayth dyd save them withoute belevynge that the manna was altered into his bodye even so doothe this faithe save us although we beleve not that the substaunce of Breade is turned into his naturall bodye. For the same faith shall save us which saved them. And we are bounde to beleve no more under payne of dampnacion than they were bounde to beleve."[1]

In so doing he applied the one true test of authenticity to the doctrine of transubstantiation. That of conformity with the scriptures. Disregarding all beliefs which had no scriptural basis, he could condfidently reject transubstantiation in the belief that only the articles of the Creed were of importance in mans quest for salvation, for 'in the other is no peirl, so that we have a probable reason to dissent

1 John Frith - Answer unto more 'op cit' Bi^{V}

from them.'[1]

It was only once having cleared the way to question the doctrine of transubstantiation, that Frith felt he could turn to the authenticity of the doctrine itself. Starting with a quotation from the early papers of Gelasius he stated "Surelye the sacramente of the bodye and bloude of Christe which we receavye are a godly thing, and therefore through theme are we made partakers of the godly nature. Thus, I am sure, was the old doctrine which they cannot avoid and therefore, with the Scripture, nature, and father, I may conclude that there remaynet the substance and nature of breade and wyne."[2]

Since he refused to acknowledge any change in the substance of the elements, Frith also naturally rejected the idea that both believer and unbeliever alike could partake of the flesh of Christ. This he did on the basis of scriptural authority, where he found in the risen Christ's refusal to allow Mary to touch him because her faith was incomplete, evidence that God would not allow an unbeliever to eat the actual flesh of Christ, or to be said to live in Christ.

1 'ibid' Nviii^{v}

2 'ibid' Nviii^{v}

> "Christ sayeth he that eatheth my fleshe, and drynketh my bloud dwelleth in me an I in him. Now we knowe right well that the wycked do eate the sacrament, and yet neither dwell in Christe nor Christ in them. Wherfore it must followe yt the sacrament is not the very flesh of Christ."[1]

On this point Frith's interpretation of the sacrament was fully coherent with his theological understanding of justification. The only true preparation needed to approach the sacrament is to do so in faith. No works or deeds could make a worthy recipient, and even if transubstantiation did take place, the elements would still be of no benefit unless they were eaten in faith. Therefore, as Frith held that faith was the essential component, in the partaking of the sacrament, then there would be no reason for God to change the elements into Christs body and blood, and thus Frith could conclude "and therfore syth God and nature make nought in vayne, it followeth consequently, that hys natural fleshe is not there, but onelye a momoryall therof".[2]

Finally, Frith maintained that in claiming to eat the body and drink the blood of Christ the clergy were

1 'ibid' Hv^{r}

2 'ibid' Hvii^{r}

claiming more for themselves than the angels in heaven. Accordingly, he advised his readers to try to imitate the angels, feeding on Christ with joy, that he has taken upon him the sins of the world.

Thomas Solme also saw the church's claims for transubstantiation as far outreaching the significance allocated to the elements by Christ himself. Directing his work to a less educated audience than Frith he emphasised his message by the use of polemic.

> "They say that after the bowynge of thyse mouthe ... the brede beynge brede and then changyd and made the very body of Christe really and substauncially. And then if he be there really [as they say] it is no real thinge of rembraunce no synge, or sacrament, but the self substance, the selfe thyng."[1]

Contrasting this with the purpose of Christ's institution of the last supper "in remembraunce of his dethe to be a synge and mystery of his swett promissis, stablisshyd and fulfylled in his blood."[2]. Solme was in no doubt that the church had erred in its

1 Thomas Solme - 'op cit' Ci^{r}

2 'ibid' Bviii^{r}

teaching on this matter. For how could a priest create Christ's natural body out of the bread when Christ did not even do this himself. Solme never doubted that God could enact this change if he so wished, but believed that Christ alone could say 'this is my body'. Appealing to the simpler reasoning of his readership, Solme questions whether when he spoke these words the priest was really referring to his own body, in which case it was 'the bodye of a false lostell, a dranke man, a theffe, a lecherer or some othere synnere, and then there is unclen body for any man to worshipe for God."[1]

Thus he touched on a further concern of the reformers that the ordinary people were likely to look upon the consecrated elements as God, and give reverence to them in God's place. Touching once more on the realm of reason, Solme sought to prove that the natural body of Christ could not be present in the sacrament as this was against all natural law. How he asked could all the consecrated elements be the natural body of Christ when "if his manhede were mad and incresyd dayly to the quantyte of there brede and wynne which they spend dayly in that use, then shulde there in on day be cart lodis more than he dyde in XXXII, yeres whan he was

1 'ibid' Cii^{r}

here in erthe."[1]

Hooper took a slightly different approach to the subject, his objection to the doctrine lay on the basis that Christs flesh was not perceptible to the senses when the believer partook of the elements. Christologically, Hooper envisaged the humanity of Christ as relating very strongly with the natural qualities of mankind. Transubstantiation was unacceptable because the church could not show him the natural body of Christ as it was born of the Virgin Mary.

> I will not judge my saviour tha died for the sinne of the worlde to have a body in heaven sensible with all qualities of trew man and in the sacrament without all qualities and quantities of a trew body."[2]

On this basis he accused the church of perpetuating a Marcionite christology, emphasising Christ's transcendent qualities at the expense of according to him the full characteristics of his humanity.

1 'ibid' Cii^{r}

2 John Hooper Declaration of Christ 'op cit' I^{v}

"This is a wonderful doctrine, to make the glorious body of Christ to be a trew body, and yet lacketh all the qualities and quantities of a body if Christ could have souche a dreaming body as they spek of, yet may I not belyve, it is in the sacrament corporally because Christ sayth Nolite Credere."[1]

Primarily, Hooper believed that the Lords Supper was instituted as a remembrance of Christ's saving death until he returned again. Additionally in the words of institution Christ spoke of his earthly body, and not of a mystical resurrected body possessing a different form. In this he followed the traditional Pauline teaching, accepted by a majority of the major reformers. There was, however, also present in his writings, a mysticism which allowed him to accept that the body of Christ is truly eaten in the sacrament through faith. The idea is not developed in any great detail, but like Frith, follows more the teaching of Oecolampadius than that of Luther.

1 John Frith Answere unto More Civ[v]

D THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SACRAMENT

The major concern of the reformers in this area centred on the theological aspects of the debate, and in particular on the presence of Christ's natural body in the sacrament. Additionally they also expressed some concern over both the form of the service, and the attitude of the recipients when approaching the Lord's table.

First and foremost amongst these concerns was whether the sacrament should be administered to the laity in both kinds. John Frith condemned the common practice of reserving the wine for the priests alone, believing that this practice stemmed solely from the need to protect the doctrine of transubstantiation, and that as such it had no theological or scriptural basis.

> "They housell the lay people but with one kinde only because the wyne can not continue nor be reserved to have ready at hande when nede were."[1]

1 John Frith Answere unto More Civ[v]

However, as his major concern in this document was to speak of the spiritual eating of Christ, he failed to go into any greater detail upon this point.

Many of the early English reformers seemed content to remain silent upon the administration of the sacrament in both kinds, despite the fact that the Act of Six Articles must have come as a bitter blow to those who looked to Henry to reform the church. Strangely its reaffirmation that the elements should be given to the laity in one kind alone, evoked little in the way of written response from many of those who were eager enough to voice their opinions on transubstantiation. Of the five writers[1] who expressed opinions on the Lords Supper after this date, only two mentioned the administering of the elements in both kinds.

John Hooper briefly mentioned that the clergy 'believe that holy sacrament usid as a comunion under boothe kindes, is a new and late indvented doctrine."[2] and referred his readers to the scriptures where they would "fyond the contratie in the word of god". Only William Turner chose to devote any real time to the subject.

1 William Turner, John Hooper, Thomas Solme, Henry Stalybridge, Henry Brinkelow

2 John Hooper Ten Commandments 'op cit' Fiii^{V}

This strange silence perhaps reflects not their lack of interest in this issue, but their growing concern that Henry should not feel that they had set out to challenge his authority, or to direct the church too far along the lines of the autonomy found in the Swiss reform movement. Additionally, they were probably unwilling to risk provoking hostility amongst the laity in view of the all too recent Pilgrimage of Grace, which had been partially inspired by the laity's resistance to religious change. They were also unwilling to risk the chance of civil unrest, along the lines of the peasants' revolt in Germany.

Turners Huntyng and Fyndiyng of the Romish Foxe[1] is a fine example of uncompromising anti-clericalism. In it Turner attacked the newly established and independent English church, for preserving within it many Roman Catholic doctrines and practices. He held the refusal to give the laity communion in both kinds, as symptomatic of England's continued affiliation to the Roman church.

> "The [Pope] sufferinth this myxture whyche is both the kyndes of the sacrament only to gyven unto the prestes for he will let lay men have but the one

1 William Turner Romish Fox 'op cit'

half of it he careth [belyle] not very myche for lay men that vyll not suffer them to aim by thys meane unto healthe of body ad soule ad to forgyvnes of synne. this is the doctryne of Antechriste, and yf the Pope be Antechrist it is the popes doctryne."[1]

Turner was in no doubt that the laity were intended to receive the elements in both kinds. This is what Christ intended when he instituted the supper. The clergy had made a false and unscriptural division between the clergy and the laity. When Christ first celebrated the communion with his followers he did not command that the Apostles alone should drink his blood, but rather that all the faithful should carry out the act of remembrance until he came. Even if Christ had intended to impose such limitations upon the Sacrament then the clergy still did the laity great wrong when they compelled them "in payne of death to receyve the half of the sacrament whych were not comanded of Christ to receyve it."[2]. Thus Turner concluded that the priesthood were taking away from Christ's people that which was their due.

1 William Turner Romish Fox 'op cit' B^r

2 'ibid' Div^r

The reformer's attempts to belittle the role of the clergy and discredit the doctrines and practices of the established church, inevitably took the form of extreme anticlericalism, attacking both the worthiness of the clergy and the importance of their priestly role as mediators between God and the ordinary people.

By their attack on the Eucharist as a vehicle of God's grace and forgiveness, the reformers struck right at the heart of priestly power, for they removed from the layman the necessity of having to consult a priest in matters pertaining to his spiritual well being. If the elements were indeed no more than bread and wine, consecrated not by the priest but by the faith of the believer, as claimed by Frith, then the presence of the priest was unnecessary, for he did no more than the ordinary lay person.

> "For as surelye shall it certyfy your cōscyence and outwarde sences through he consecrate it not [so thou consecrate it thy self; that is to saye, so thou know what is meante therbye and geve hym thankes] as though he made a thowsand blessinges over it. And so I say that it is ever consecrated in hys harte yt beleveth, though the priest cōsecrate it not. And contrary wyse if they consecrate it never so muche, and thy consecracyon be not bye, yt helpeth the not a ryshe. For

excepte thou knowe what is mente therby and beleve, gevynge thankis for hys Bodye breakynge and bloude sheadynge it can not profyte the ."[1]

This statement had two effects, firstly it removed the emphasis from the role of the priest to that of the believer in the consecration of the sacraments. Secondly it removed the need for concern over the spiritual worthiness of the priest, replacing it with the need for the individual to consider his own spiritual worthiness instead. When Frith wrote of the consecration of the sacrament by the faith of the believer, he was doing far more than simply explaining what he believed happened in the Eucharist. His statement also went far beyond answering the worries of those who in the face of growing clerical corruption doubted the ability of many priests to consecrate the sacrament, on grounds of their spiritual and moral unworthiness. For whilst doing both these things Frith was also directly challenging the right of priests to lay claim to spiritual prvilege, or to exercise their authority over the laity. By implication if the presence of the priest was unnecessary for the consecration of the elements, it was also unnecessary for the absolution of sins, and the administration of

1 John Frith - Answer unto More 'op cit' L[r]

of extreme unction, and ultimately to any aspect relating to the relationship between God and man.

These ideas were not new but inherent in the Protestant doctrine of soteriology and the emphasis upon the individualised relationship between God and man, void of any need or possibility for intervention from external sources. The ability of the laity to act in the role of a priest and consecrate the elements for themselves is similarly the logical development of the personalised view of salvation, held in common by all the reformers. Luther was aware of this when he spoke of the priesthood of all believers. He also recognised the dangerous implications of such a belief for the continuance and stability of authority. These fears were more forceably brought home by the peasant's revolt of 1524, in which Luther's teachings were manipulated, along more sinister lines, than simply releasing the people from the tyranny of the priesthood.

Frith's denial of the need for the priestly consecration of the sacraments, was also the crime of which many of the Lollards stood accused, and like them it was to cost him his life also. To those in power it smacked of anti-authoritarianism, a tenet of faith which in the wrong hands could be used against them.

However, writing as he did in 1533 Frith could afford to challenge the position of the priest, as the essential mediator of God's divine grace. By the time John Hooper and William Turner focused their attention on the Lord's Supper in the 1540's they were unwilling to express such radical ideas, restricting their teaching to the form of the service, and the need for the laity to actually receive the elements of the mass.

John Hooper who strongly condemned the mass, speaking of it in terms of idolatry and deceit, wrote of the form of the service in an almost conciliatory manner. He firstly acknowledged that the mass in its entirety was not totally bad, and then called upon the authorities to retain only those parts of the mass which were good, relieving the faithful from submission to the ceremonial abuses which were perpetuated by the church.

Exactly what constituted an acceptable form was not described in any great detail but appears to have consisted of that which was passed down from the early church. Therefore, in reality when Hooper spoke of retaining that which was good, he was actually calling for a return to the practices of the most perfect form of God's church.

"As concerning the use of this sacrament and all other. The rites and cermeons that be godly they shuld be so kept, and usid in the church as they were deliveryd unto us of the highe Bishope Christ, the auctor of all sacramentes. For thus is trew that he moost goodly, moost religiously, and moost perfectly instituted and celebratyd the supper."[1]

All others which had been added since that time were viewed as being in contravention of God's will, and as abnegating the institution of Christ. The contemporary practices of the church were seen as placing too much emphasis upon the consecration and efficacy of the elements, whilst the preaching of God's word was placed in the shadows. Thus the eucharistic service was held to be inadequate, and far removed from Christ's purpose at the time of the Lord's Supper. The preaching of the word had been replaced by the rituals surrounding the consecration of the elements, the emphasis on the remembrance of Christ's death, shifted to the actual physical presence of Christ in the elements, and the efficacy of the Sacraments regardless of faith. Frith, Hooper, and the others wanted a return to the Pauline

1 John Hooper - Declaration of Christ 'op cit' Gvii^{r}

theology of the church. The sacraments could only be said to be properly celebrated when they were done so in accordance with the customs of the early church. This meant a return to the preaching of the gospel, in which the sacrament played an integral part.

> "The best maner and moost godly way to celebrate this supper is to preache the deathe of Christ unto the church, and the redemption of man as Christ did at his supper and there to have commune prayers as Christ prayer with his disciples, then to repet the last wordes of the supper and with the same to breake the bread and distribute the wine to the whole church. then gevynge thanks to god, depart in peace."[1]

Additionally the reformers placed great emphasis on the use of the vernacular in religious services. Frith insists that it was not enough for the laity to attend the communion service and partake of the elements without any understanding of what was taking place.

> "Theyr consecrayton shulde stande in preachynge unto then the deathe of Chryste which hath delyvered them out of the Egypt of synne, and from

1 'ibid' Gvii^{r}

the fyrye furnace of Pharoah the devell. And as fore there waggynge of there fyngers over it, and sayenge syxe or seaven wordes in latyn helpeth them nothynge at al. For howe can they beleve by the meanes of hys wordes, when they knowe not what he sayeth ... for excepte I blesse it my selfe, it profytteth me no more the if it were unblessed."[1]

Similarly to Hooper he reversed the order in status of the elements and the preaching of the word in the communion service. Following St. Augustine's definition of a sacrament, as a symbol denoting a thing greater than itself, it was only natural that preaching should now be made the most important contingent of the celebration. For without preaching the people were not mindful of that which the sacrament represented, and therefore from this it followed were unable to benefit from it.

Frith believed that it was of the utmost importance that the people were properly prepared to receive the sacrament, so that they might eat and drink in rightful remembrance of Christ's death for their salvation. This is evident from his suggested prayer of

1 John Frith - Answer unto more 'op cit' Lii[V]

consecration[1] which focused the minds of those present on the true meaning of the sacrament and so enabled them to benefit from partaking of the sacrament.

By so believing the reformers effectively excluded any who did not truly believe from partaking in the holy sacrament of Christ's body and blood. In this way they solved the age old concern of the established church that non-believers might eat of the consecrated elements and thus of Christ's actual body and blood. Frith insisted that since the elements were and remained as no more than bread and wine after the consecration, those who did not have faith partook only of the bread and wine and not of Christ's holy sacrament.

> "He that is unfaithful and cometh to the Maundy eateth but onely the breade that profyteth him, not withstanding he eatheth besyde that hys own dampnation, because he beleveth not that yt body of our saviour whiche the sacramente representeth

1 'ibid' - Christ 'left us not onely thy worde, which may instructe our hartes, but also a vysyble taken to certifye even oure outwards senses of this greate benefitte that we shulde not doubte but that the body and frute of thy passyon are ours' Mi^{r}

is broken for his synnes and his bloude shedde to wasshe them awaye."[1]

Having removed the responsibility for the proper consecration of the elements from the shoulders of the priest placing it instead on the believers themselves, it seems a natural progression of this belief that the believer should examine himself before partaking in the communion. In the past the consecration of the elements had been made dependent on the spiritual worthiness of the priest to adequately perform his duty, this being no longer the case Frith strongly advised his readers to first examine their consciences before approaching the Lord's table.

"Let a man there fore examine hymsilfe, and so let hym eatheth the breade and drinkethe of the cup ... This proving or examining of a mans silfe is first to thinke with hymsilfe withe whate lust and desire he cometh unto the Maundy, and wyll eatheth that breade, whether he be sure that he ys the childe of God and in the faythe of Christe and whether his conscience do bear him witness that Christes bodye was broken for hym and whether the

1 'ibid' Nii^{V}

lust that he hath to prayse God and thanke hym withe a faythful harte in the midst of the bretheren do drive him thitherward or else whether he do it for the meates sake or to kepe the custome then it were better that he were awaye for he that eatheth or drinkethe unworthily, eatheth and drinkethe his awne dampnacion, because it maketh no difference of the Lordes bodye."[1]

The idea that men need to examine their consciences before approaching the Lord's table was of course not unique to Frith. The established church had made participation in the mass conditional on first performing confession and penance. In Switzerland, the reformers had insisted that communicants first recieved instruction from their pastor before they partook of the holy sacrament.

In the minds of the English reformers priestly confession may have been swept away by the newly personalised religion, and acts of penitence regarded as a retrograde step in seeking God's forgiveness, but the same emphasis still remained. A man should not seek to approach the Lord's table unless he had first examined his conscience and spiritual standing before

1 John Frith 'ibid' Kiv^{r}

God, and thus assured himself of God's forgiveness and cleansing of any fault that might make him unworthy to approach the Lord's table and partake of the sacrament of Christ's saving body and blood.

The administration and interpretation of the Sacraments remained a vexed issue amongst the reformers. Writing in 1543, almost ten years after the Act of Supremacy of 1534, William Turner still had cause to lament over the abuses of the sacramental system. Not only were the laity denied the right to receive the sacrament in both kinds, but they were also encouraged to believe that the priest could receive the sacrament on their behalf, with just as much efficacy to their souls as if they had received it themselves. That this role of the priest as the communicant of God's grace should further be extended to embrace the souls of the dead as well of the souls of the living was totally unacceptable to the soteriology of the Reformation movement. The final proof of its deception was to be found in its absence from mention in the Scripture, and thus it failed to comply with the ultimate test of faith and validity, in as much as doctrines were concerned.

> "Is it agreing with the worde of God that a preste may say masse ans recyve the sacrament for a laye mā and to teach that the prestes receyvynge of the sacramēt deserveth forgyvenesse of Synnes or at

the leaste profitable for lay men and for the soules depated. I thynke may have ye any text in the whole scripture whereby ye cā prove that a laye mā may not as well recyve the sacramet for a preste as the preste may receyve it for a laye mā."[1]

Here too the conflict lies between the new individualised relationship of Protestant belief, embodied in the idea of justification by Faith, and the established ideas of communal responsibility. Again the priestly role was deprived of its function as a mediator between God and man. The idea of the priest standing in as a substitute between man and God was no longer acceptable, the priest was no longer accorded the status of being able to partake in the sacrament to another's benefit, and the same denial would undoubtedly be further applied to embrace the belief that a priest or monk could successfully carry out another man's penance, or earn God's forgiveness for another through prayer or fasting.

1 William Turner Romish Fox 'op cit' Dv[r]

E CHURCH ABUSE OF THE SACRAMENT

The sacramental teaching of the church, laid its doctrines open to all manner of abuse and misunderstanding on the part of the laity. This ability to deceive the ordinary uneducated people either intentionally or unintentionally had been the spark which led Luther to call for an open debate on the issue of indulgences, and subsequently to the emergence of the German Reformation. When the English reformers attacked the practices of the mass within the established church, some did so with strong sentiments of anti-clericalism, others sought to give the weight of reasoning to their protestations, all believed that within the claims of the church for the elements lay deliberate or accidental deceit. Additionally they saw the claims that only the priest could consecrate the elements, and those which stated that in the bread of the Eucharist God conferred salvation upon the recipient as amounting to little more than tyranny, those who failed to comply with the church's requests being excommunicated and consequently excluded from partaking in the mass, and in actuality from receiving God's salvation through the sacrificial qualities of the elements.

In the eyes of the early reformers the ceremony of the mass in the contemporary church was a long way removed from that at first instituted by Christ at the Last Supper. It also failed to relate to the Pauline teaching on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians X and XI, favourite passages of the reformers when they addressed themselves to the problem of the mass.

When Henry Brinkelow wrote his Lamentations of a Christen agaynst the city of London his strong condemnation of the way in which the Church had corrupted the celebration of the Lord's Supper, echoes the opinions of the majority of reformers. It would also have found a ready audience amongst the growing number of English Protestants who were discontent with the reluctance of Henry VIII to enact great change in the recently established Anglican church. Referring to the church as the 'whore of Babylon' Brinkelow strongly criticised the clergy for their failure to grasp and teach the true meaning of the sacrament to their congregation.

> "Wherfore I will exhorte all prestes that wyl be of Christes congregation to fle and geve over that abnominable massynge, which is a blasphemy to Christes bloude, in that they make of it a sacryfyce. What sacrifice can that be where no bloude is shedde. Wherfore in Christes name all

> you I saye that wolde be of Christes churche, forsake thy whoze with all her abnominable rabbles."[1]

He continued to specify exactly how the church had strayed from the teaching of the New Testament on the sacrament.

> "It is the greatest idol under heaven as it is used in this masse, and a God of the makynge of Anti christ as is sayde, whiche masse, is after his institucyon an heape of folish ceremonies without significacyons to avaunce and sett out his God to the blearynge of the eyes of the simple."[2]

It is not unusual to find the established church referred to as the agent of the Antichrist. Luther too had referred to the Roman Catholic Church with this term. It is characteristic of the reformers' concept of eschatology, in which they saw the plight of the church as symptomatic of the ever nearing end of the world, and the second coming of Christ as depicted in the New Testament.

1 Henry Brinkelow - Lamentation 'op cit' Dvi^{r}

2 'ibid' Avii^{v}

That the ordinary people of the age had little understanding of the fine distinctions of church doctrine is beyond question, but the suggestion of the reformers that the established church deliberately attempted to deceive the people cannot pass without question. Undoubtedly many of the uneducated faithful fell into the trap of giving to the elements the reverence which should have been reserved for God, and the clergy for the most part failed to correct this error, perhaps due in part to their inability to recognise that the error existed, and partly to the lack of guidance from those in authority above them. It is hardly surprising then that both the mass priests and the common people often accorded to the elements a status that should have been given to God alone.

The reformers too were painfully aware of the inadequate teaching received by the people, hence their insistence that the celebration of the Lord's Supper should be accompanied by the preaching of God's word, and an explanation of Christ's intention when he first instituted the supper. They also recognised that when the priest spoke of the consecrated bread and wine as the actual body and blood of Christ, this resulted in the elements being worshipped by the people. That which was intended as a symbol of Christ's death, unintentionally became an idol to be worshipped by the people. The reformers were so acutely aware of the

people's tendency to worship the elements, that when a treatise on images was printed in 1535, it contained a long section on the idolatry of the mass[1], setting it on the same level as statues and pictures as a thing to be condemned.

Whatever the real origins of the ordinary people's practice of worshipping the elements, men like Henry Stalybridge were only too pleased to name the established church as the deliberate teacher of this erroneous doctrine. He firmly blamed the clergy for presenting the bread and wine to the people as an object for worship.

> "For therin ye offre to be worshypped of the people, a signe for a saver, and that hath bene made by a synnefull mannys handes for owre eternall lyvynge God. Thus you most ever able Antichristes have brought them from the true worshyppynge of God, to the worshyppynge of breade and wynne, two false Gods (as they are used)

1 Preachers of the Argenytyne - <u>A treaty declaryng and shewwig dyvers causes that pyctures and other images ar in no wise to be suffered in churches</u> 1535 STC

of oure romysche fathers appoyntynge."[1]

Frith too spoke out against the belief that the sacramental bread and wine once consecrated should become objects of worship thus usurping God of the honour that was due to him alone. He drew a parallel with the way in which the scriptures were held in reverence but not used as objects of worship, and pointed out that none would suggest that the scriptures be treated as anything other than God's holy word to be read and studied as his message to mankind. This being so he concluded that the elements of the Eucharist were also to be treated for what they are namely the means by which Christians are reminded of the death of Christ. He readily warned his readers against the deceit that accompanied the doctrine of transubstantiation and resulted in the worshipping of the sacrament. This was the result of the work of "The children of pedition whiche hath overwhelmed this worlde wite synne"[1]. However despite all this he counselled them not to avoid attending the mass on behalf of 'these children of perdition', for since they were also able to consecrate the elements by the faith they bear in Gods promise to his people, they were

1 Henry Stalybridge 'op cit' Ciiii^{r}

2 John Frith - Answer unto More 'op cit' Kvii^{r}

also able to benefit from the service of the mass on that same individual level.

> "Nevertheless we must receive it reverently because of the doctryne that it bringeth us. For it preacheth Christes deathe unto us and describeth it before owre ayne, even as a faythful preacher by the word doth instil it into us by our eares and hearynge."[1]

In this way those who were dissatisfied with the way the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the church might still attend the ceremony, and yet remain apart from the sacrilege of offering worship to the man-made substances of wine and bread. At the same time they could bring to the mass a new significance of their choosing, consecrating the elements by faith, and using them as a constant reminder of God's promise of salvation through the death of Christ.

If the church was derelict in its duty, in as much as it failed to correct the common misunderstanding that the elements were to be regarded as objects of worship, it perpetuated a worse error by allowing the people to believe that the mass brought forgiveness not only for

1 'ibid' Kvii^{v}

the sins of the living but also for the sins of the dead.

The same dilemma that Luther had been forced to face in the indulgences issue was for the English reformers focused upon the abuse of the sacrament, whose saving powers were sold to enrich the coffers of the Church, at the expense of deceiving not only the common people but also those in positions of power.

Robert Barnes found abhorrent the idea that a mass said by a priest for money could benefit the souls of the dead. He used this as an occasion to attack the monastic foundations, as the embodiment of the idea that a prayer said by one man could possibly benefit the soul of another. This too was the logical development of an individualised concept of soteriology. Since man's relationship to God was of a purely personal nature, then no matter how many prayers were said, or masses celebrated no benefit could be conferred upon the souls of the dead.

This attack on the priest or the monks saying prayers for the souls of the dead, [dependent on the benefactor first offering a substantial endowment to the religious foundation], was only part of a more extensive assault upon the very existence of such abuses. The manner in which Barnes sheds doubt upon the efficacy of such

masses, was very mild when compared with the vitriolic anti-clericalism of men like Simon Fish, and his main criticism is related to the ineffectual nature of these masses, and not to the actual request for payment itself.

In contrast William Turner focused his attention on the fact that the people were encouraged to think that by the payment of a few pence to a priest, to celebrate the mass on their behalf, they would ensure that the wrath of God was placated and their sins forgiven.

> "It it be true when a lay man gyveth a preste two pence or a gifte to saye masse for him and to receyve the sacrament for hym al that the preste deserveth in receyvynge of the sacrament is the laye manes deservynge, when the preste is a whore monger and a deadly syner, as many a one be, then the prestes deservynge of the wrath of God for unwortherly receyvynge of the sacrament, is the lay mannes deservying and so byeth he wyth his money the wrath of god." [1]

Turner returned to the old idea that in order for a priest to actually effect the miracle of transub-

1 William Turner _Romish Fox_ 'op cit' Dviii v

stantiation he must be a worthy man. In this manner he played upon the already existent fears of his readers, that many priests were not worthy. He pointed out that those who paid a priest to receive the sacrament for them that they might also benefit from its qualities in their absence, were actually purchasing their own condemnation as did the priest - if he was unworthy himself. This was after all the logical conclusion if such a communal interpretation of salvation was to be applied to God's forgiveness.

He also accused the Church of deliberately misleading the people to a point where they believed that by simply receiving the sacrament their sins were forgiven. At this point he indulged in the expression of extreme anti-clerical sentiments, since this was the most certain way to incense his readership to feel indignation at the deceit of the clergy. Knowing full well the widespread concern over the spiritual state of the clergy he played upon these worries, by suggesting that if partaking of the elements resulted in the forgiveness of sins then all of the clergy, however, unworthy would be sure of salvation, knowing that he was most likely to evoke a negative response to this statement.

> "That is to say thys holy mynglyng together of the body and bloude of our lord Jesu Christe, be unto

me and to all them that receyve it, helthe of body and soule to deserve everlastyng life. If thys were not impossible, then neded no preste nor bysshop go to the devel, though they were never so great murders and whoremongers for anon after that they had done the mischefe they might stregygth wayes mixe togethe both the partes of the sacrament and deserve therby forgyveness."[1]

The idea that the clergy should possess such an exalted position was totally unacceptable to reformers who believed that God judged all men on their faith . To the minds of the ordinary people the priesthood was corrupt and many in priestly office unworthy to command respect as men of God. A number of the reformers were quite willing to compromise the reforming ideas to play on the anti-clerical sentiments of the masses, if this was seen as the most expedient way to advance the progress of their ideas. For example Henry Stalybridge in his Epistle Exhoratorye 1544 did little to enlighten the prejudices of the uneducated, but rather served to enforce them when he wrote of the mass priests.

"Most comenlye is that office done by an unlerned luske, a blynd bussarde, an assehead, an idole, a

1 'ibid' Aviii^{v}

whoremonger, a dronkarde, a belly god, traytour, a Sodomite, a tyraunte, an unfaythful Papist, and the most knowe in towne and yea, somtyme fro the vometyng of his undygested supper, or else from the fylthye occupyenge of an harlot, he cometh stryaygh t to the aultre to do it, yet must it be thought a sacrifice of no lesse value and strength, than that Christ himselfe offered upon the crosse. And he that will not so believe, shall be burned for an heretique."[1]

Stalybridge's outburst shows that the esteem in which the priesthood was held did not rise when Henry became head of the Church. That such a condemnation could be issued in 1544 and yet still be expected to raise support, is a testimony to the reformers impatience with Henry's failure to achieve any real improvement or change in the area of clerical abuse.

The constant insistence of the established church that the consecrated elements possessed a power in their own right resulted in the emergence of a cult of folk-lore and superstition surrounding the magical powers of the bread and the wine. All such superstitions were of course condemned by the reformers as yet another

1 Henry Stalybridge 'op cit' Cv^{r}

symptom of clerical abuse and deceit. Turner noted that the same sacrament received for the souls of the dead was also used to restore the health of sick animals.

> Ye holde still the receyvynge of Christes body ad bloude that these beastes shulde not dye. If to recyve the sacrament in the remembrance of scabbed shepe or messeled swyne that Christe ordered to be receyved in the remembrance of hys holy passyon be not Antechristes and the popes doctryne say ye whose doctryne is it and who put it into youre missal,and why you have not scraped that out as wel as the Popes name."[1]

Keith Thomas work Religion and the Decline of Magic[2] records that possession of the consecrated bread conferred upon its owner such magical powers, that the church was faced with the problem of theft of the host, and that some would try to carry the host away in their mouths that they might own it as a source of magical power.

1 William Turner Romish Fox 'ibid' Avii[V]

2 Keith Thomas Religion and the Decline of Magic - Middlesex 1971

Turner's real criticism of the church had its roots in the failure of the clergy to attempt to show the people the error of these superstitious practices. The church had failed to such an extent that they allowed these errors to remain within the missal thus taking no stance on the issue, as an example to the laity.

> "Ye holde styll that the masse or the receyvynge of the sacramet is profytable for a kybed or a mould hele, for the frenche pox, for the goute in the to, ad also for a winchester goose, for it is styll in the missal unput out and unpreached agaynt."[1]

The reformers would not have been unaware of the difficulties of overcoming the natural prejudices and superstitions that had evolved over a number of centuries unchecked. To Turner the full horror of the situation was that the Roman Church, far from attempting to check these practices, actively encouraged them, and that the Anglican Church had done the same by failing to delete them from the missals they still used in their daily services.

John Frith also testified to the continuing claims of

1 William Turner 'ibid' Aviii^{r}

magical powers for the consecrated elements. His main objection to such claims was that they caused the people to treat the elements as idols, and thus directed them away from the worship of the one true God.

> "I saye of the sacrament syth the myracles yt are done by it, do make me thynke other wyse the scrypture, wyll and cause me to worshyp it. I dout not but they are done by the devell to delude the people."[1]

Frith's approach to the question of miracles was coloured by his view of God as prepared to test the faith of those who follow him. The scriptures were provided as a gauge by which men could judge whether or not a deed or practice concurred with God's will for his people. If it is not to be found in the scriptures or indeed even more if it is condemned in the scriptures, then God's people on earth were to resist all temptation or pressure to accept it, since it would be to the detriment of their souls.

Answering the conjectured objections of those who opposed his ideas that "God will not suffer him (the devil) to abuse the sacrament of his body and blood"

1 John Frith - Answer unto More Liiii^{r}

with the explanation that God "wyll suffer it, and doth suffer it, to see whether we wyll be faythful, and abyde in his word or not,"[1] Frith no doubt had in his mind Christ's eschatological teaching that many false prophets would come in his name since the reformers all too often saw in the continuing abuses of the church, and the prosecution of the faithful a sure sign that the second coming was always imminent. Additionally from the surety, that they would be safe whilst their tormentors would receive God's punishment they gained strength to continue in the face of persecution.

Frith shows more tolerance towards the claims that the sacraments have the power to perform miracles, than does Turner. This is probably due to the fact that he is writing for educated men who will be able to distinguish between true claims of the miraculous, and the falsehood of superstition, whereas Turner is attempting to show a largely uneducated audience the errors of holding such superstitions. Frith then could allow for some miracles to be ascribed to the elements, whilst Turner could afford to make no such admission as this would have been misunderstood by his readership. Frith's work therefore, possesses a greater sense of tolerance than those of some of his reforming brethren,

1 'ibid' Liiii^{r}

and he can write.

> "Nevertheless if I should graunte that all the myracles which were done and ascribe unto the Sacraments, were verye tru miracles and done of God himselfe (As I doubt not but some of them by true) yet theruppon it doth no followe that the Sacrament should be the very natural body of Christ. For we have evident storyes that certayne parsons have been delyvered from bodely dyseases through the sacrament of Baptysme. And yet the water is not the Holy Ghost, nor the verye thynge itselfe wherof it is a sacramente. Gode maye worke myracles through many thinges which are not hys natuall bodye."[1]

Thus Frith concluded that the teaching of the Church was deliberately dishonest and deceitful. By teaching that to deny the natural presence of Christ's body in the sacrament was to purchase damnation, the church was merely enforcing its teaching with threats. Frith, ever mindful of his role as a teacher who greatly influenced the beliefs and actions of others, explained his refusal to agree to the church's belief in transubstantiation partially in terms of his

1 'ibid' Liiii^{v}

responsibility to his weaker brethren. Frith felt that it was important for each man to come to his own understanding of the elements, and it was for this reason that he made an impassioned plea to his brethren that they should. "leve it in different fore all men to judge therin as God shall open his harte, ād no syde to condempne or despise the tother, but to nourishe in all thinges brothelye love, and to beare others infymytes."[1]

On the issue of the sacraments Frith shows more tolerance than many of his reforming brethren. In his writings there is none of the insistence of Luther, that was to cause an irreparable rift with the Swiss reformers, for despite his lengthy expositions on the subject, Frith never held the interpretations of the elements as central to the debate on true faith. His major concern was that his followers realised that it was not outward actions, or beliefs about the substance of the elements that counted, but simply a pure faith in God's promise. The Church abused the sacraments by making the external count far more than the pure love of God.

Ironically it was upon this point which he classified

1 John Frith Articles 'op cit' Piv^{r}

as 'a thinge indifferent'[1] that he was condemned to death, remaining faithful to his conscience as an example to his followers.

> "I cannot in consciens abiure and answere that our prelites opinion of the sacrament, that is , that the substance of breade and wine is verily chaunged into the fleshe and bloude of our saviour Jesus Christ, is an undoubted article of the faythe necessary to be beleaved under paine of dāpnacyon."[1]

> "Because I will not bynde the congregacion of Christ [by myn example] to admitte any necessary article bysyde oure crede, and specialy non such as cannot be proved true by scripture. And I say that the churche, as they caule yt, can not compelle us to receave any suche articles to be of necessite under payne of dampnacion."[2]

1 'ibid' Pvi^{r}

2 'ibid' Pvi^{v}

F BENEFIT OF THE SACRAMENT

That Frith died because of his refusal to accept the doctrine of Transubstantiation testifies to the importance that the reformers accorded to the sacramental issue. They did not reject the sacraments of baptism and communion outright as they did the remaining five sacraments, for despite the many abuses evident in the sacramental system, the reformers agreed that the sacraments properly administered and received with proper faith were of great benefit to the communicant. This was because above all else they helped to develop and increase the faith of the true believer by acting as a sign of God's promised salvation. The conferring of God's grace through the sacrament was of course to remain conditional on their worthy receipt by the believer at the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

The theologians of the medieval church believed that the sacraments conferred grace of their own volition. The bread and wine were accorded certain properties in their own right, acting independently of the faith of the believer. The reformers whilst still holding the sacraments in reverence denied them the rights due to them as an independent power. The new theology, rediscovered from the time of Ratramnus defined the

elements as no more than symbolic of God's promised salvation. They were no longer accepted as conferring benefits ex opere operato, or as possessing magical powers which could cure both animal and human ailments and protect the lives of the people from misfortune or accident.

In some ways it could be said that communion became a more important element in the worship of the Church. This is because despite the fact that preaching and the reading of the Bible took prominence in the reformed theology, the elements freed from superstition came to symbolise God's promise of salvation through Christ's death with greater purity than ever before. By stripping the Eucharist of its magical connotations the reformers believed that they restored it to its rightful place as the sacrament instituted by Christ at the Last Supper, and celebrated by the Church of the New Testament. Thus in this aspect at least Christianity could be restored to its true scriptural basis.

The reformers were acutely aware that if the mass of the common people were to truly benefit from receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, then there was a desperate need that they should be taught the true meaning of the sacrament. Hence the suggested form of the service placing so much emphasis on the need for

the preaching of the word at the communion service. As all the reformers who expressed an opinion on the sacrament believed that the elements fed the body physical, and that it was the act of remembrance which satisfied the spiritual needs of the people, it was essential that the people were properly prepared to receive the sacrament, that their minds might be focused upon the symbolic representations of the bread and the wine. For as Turner writes:

> "Chryste the Son of God bothe God and man ordened hys supper to be recyved of all christen men, that they should call to remembrance the passion of Christe and the shedynge of hys most precious bloude whiche have delyvered oure soule out of the bondage of the spriritуall pharoa the devell."[1]

The actual extent to which Christ could be said to be present in the elements varied according to the slightly different theological stances taken upon the interpretation of the sacrament by the individual reformers. Frith for example followed the teaching of Oecolampadius, whilst others developed their ideas along those of Zwingli, or combined together a strange mixture of continental and home grown ideas concerning the Eucharist.

1 William Turner Romish Fox 'op cit' Dvi^{r}

This diversity, however, is not apparent in as far as the benefit of the sacrament is concerned. John Lambert claimed that by the act of remembrance the elements fed the soul, whilst Hooper saw the Eucharist as one of the many ways in which God printed in the hearts of mankind the requirements of his law.

> "So in the sacrament the Christiane hart that is instructed in the law of God and knowth the right use of the sacraments by the holy ghost and a fyrm fayth that he hathin the merits of Chistes body ad soule which is ascended corporally into heven, man in spirit receaves the effect, marrye swetyns and commodite of Christes precious body thouwg it never descend corporally thus dooth faith and the scripture compell the churche to beleve."[1]

John Frith accorded to the Eucharist not only the ability to assure the faithful that God will fulfil his promise of deliverance, by giving them a taste of the spirit in advance of their entrance to His Kingdom, but also the qualities of binding together the community of the faithful into one body.

1 John Hooper - Declaration of Christ 'op cit' Hviii^{r}

"Men cannot be ioyned into anye kynde of relygon whether it be true or false excepte they be knytte in fellowshyppe by some visyble tokens or sacramentes, the powr of which sacramentes is of such efficacite that it cannot be expressed."[1]

Following the Pauline teaching, Frith held that by partaking in the communion service the congregation of the faithful showed their oneness as the body of which Christ is the head. The Eucharist not only developed a sense of identity within the community but also deepened the faith of its members, for this was the purpose of Christ when he instituted the sacrament that the very name itself might put them in remembrance of what was meant by it.

However the English reformers approached the issue of the sacrament, whether it be through the idea of Christ's mystical presence, or the distorted realism of Lollards, one point on which they all agreed was that the elements should be received in a spirit of thanksgiving; that is thanksgiving for what God has already done through Christ, and not in the expectation of what might be achieved by receiving the magical elements of the Eucharist.

1 John Frith - Answere unto More 'op cit' Bi^{V}

Thus concluded Frith:

> "As many as do eate of this sacrament do magnifye their God, testififienge that he onele is the God Almightie, and they hys people sticking by hym to be delyvered by his power from all daunger."[1]

1 'ibid' Miii^{v}

BAPTISM

> "Baptysme saveth us through the worde of faythe whiche it preacheth, when all the world of the unbeleving perish."[1]

Of the seven sacraments professed by the Roman Catholic Church, the reformers accepted the validity of only two: Holy Communion being the first, and Baptism the second. The remainder were discounted, because they lacked scriptural authority. Christ had been both baptised, and had instituted the Lord's Supper, these two sacraments had also found continuance in the practices of the early church. This the reformers claimed indicated that these two sacraments alone had any role to play in the fulfillment of God's promise to mankind.

Of the two the Lord's Supper merited the major share of attention, and even upon this point many chose to

1 William Tyndale - Preface to the five books of Moses Antwerp 1530 from J. Foxe - The whole workes of W Tyndall, John Frith, and Doctor Barnes - J. Daye - 1572 STC 24436 p Diii^{v}

remain silent. Baptism was to take a still less prominent place, receiving only a brief mention in the works of Hooper, and only commanding a place of significance in the writings of the earlier reformers Simon Fish and William Tyndale. Even here the latter was more interested in the inner baptism of the soul, than in the actual sacrament itself. Their concern with this sacrament can possibly be attributed to the contact with continental theology at a time when Infant Baptism had been called into question by the Anabaptist groups.

The strange silence of the reformers upon this issue is perhaps indicative of the absence of any problems of note arising out of baptismal practices as they already stood within the English realm. For whereas in Germany Luther had been troubled by those who advocated adult baptism alone, there is no evidence of any widespread unrest on this point amongst the English laity. Even the Lollard remnant seems to have been more concerned over the church's claims of the qualities of the holy water, than the sacrament of baptism itself. William Turner expressed the same concern when he stated that one of the reasons he believed the English clergy to be in league with the Pope was that they held "still the hallowynge of the font whych is full of abnomnmynable blasphemies

contrarie to the word of God and that ordened Antechriste."[1] This statement is the sole mention of baptism in the entire work, whilst the mass is dealt with in far greater detail.

In 1533 John Frith also felt the need to write a short treatise on the sacrament of baptism.[2] The booklet which was printed in London by John Day states that the author's intentions were two-fold, in as much as he sought to answer two erroneous beliefs which were attributed to the physical aspect of infant baptism. The two errors he specified as placing too much emphasis on the visible sign, and upon the correct form of the ceremony, if the sacrament is to be efficacious.

Both the issues which the author chose to address, stemmed from the remnants of superstition, and have no real bearing on the issue of whether baptism should be administered to children or adults, hence attesting to the absence of any serious controversy on this issue within English reforming circles. For although Frith briefly acknowledged that not all shared in his acceptance of infant baptism, he did not consider this

1 William Turner - Romish Fox 'op cit' Bii^{r}

2 John Frith - A mirror or looking glasse wherein you may behold the Sacrament of Baptism described - John Daye London 1548? STC 11391

contingent to be of any great importance, and therefore did not dwell on the subject, beyond mentioning that Christ was known to have taken children on his knee and given them his blessing. Therefore it was only Simon Fish[1] writing from Holland in 1529 that gave any prominence to this debate.

In dealing with the subject of baptism the interpretation of the reformers was governed in this, as in all things by their understanding of salvation as a gift of God attributed to man through faith. On this basis they totally rejected any sugggestion that the ceremonial actions of the church could bring forgiveness to mankind. The water of baptism did not in itself take away sin, Sacraments did not act 'ex opere operato' or people would be baptised every day to ensure their salvation. Similarly as Frith pointed out, the child who died unbaptised was not automatically damned for lack of a few drops of water. It was therefore this misunderstanding that the reformers were most determined to avoid.

> "Although baptisme be a sacramēt to be receavid and honorable usyd of all men yet it sanctifieth no man, and souch as attribut the remission of sinne unto

1 Simon Fish Sum 'op cit'

the externall signe dooth offend. Iohan, Matthew 3 preachid penitence in the desert and remission of sinne in Christ, souche as confessed their fautes he makyd and delaryd then to be of Christes churche so that externall baptisme was but an inaugercio orxternall cosecracion of these that first belyvyd and were clensid of there in."[1]

Hooper did not totally reject all aspects of the Churchs ministry as necessary to faith. However, along with Fish he found unacceptable all suggestions that candles, salt and hallowed water were efficacious to an individuals state of salvation. They also expressed the Lollard sentiment that holy water was no different from any other water, but did not go as far as the Lollards, in that they did not reject the offices of the church in their entirety. Their concern was not so much to attack the Church but to prevent people from relying too much on outward signs to the detriment of inner faith. Over reliance on the outward aspects of Christianity was seen as giving a false sense of security which resulted in a failure to acknowledge Gods grace as the sole means of justification and forgiveness.

1 John Hooper Declaration of Christ 'op cit' Iv^{v}

"Sacraments must be usid holyly and yet not to have the office of Christ added unto then soly, it is his office to sanctifie ād purch from sinne. I tak nothing from the sacramentes but honour and extole them in all thinges as they be worthy. How be it not too much I call a sacrament a ceremony instituyd in the law of God, to th end that it shuld be a testimonye of Godes promisse unto all souche as belyve and signes of Godes good will and favour towards us."[1]

Simon Fish also accepted the sacraments as a necessary part of the Christian life. He held that not only was the sacrament of baptism efficacious to faith, it was also very necessary to salvation and membership of Christ's church. Baptism as a sacrament took two forms and thereby had two purposes. Firstly, christians were baptised in water which acted as a visible sign and signified visible membership of the earthly church. Secondly, Christians were baptised in the Holy Spirit which signified membership of God's invisible church. Here on earth it was impossible to distinguish between members of the invisible and visible church. Those who were baptised might still not be members of God's church. All were still open to temptation, none

1 'ibid' Iviii^{r}

escaped physical death. Baptism in the spirit was simply held to promise another life after the battle of this one. By baptism and sanctification in the spirit men became children of God through no means of their own, but by God's grace and Christ's saving death. John Frith was in full agreement with this, as was John Hooper when he wrote:

> "And as the promys of God the remission of sinne is receavyd by fayth, so must these sacramentes that be signes, tokes and testimonies of the promesse, be receavid in fayth thus by Christ we ar sanctified only."[1]

This sacrament then was held to play a key role in the development of a man's faith. Its role was to confirm God's promise of forgiveness delivered through Christ's teaching. By baptism Christians acknowledged that they had put on a new life in Christ. Justification was portrayed not as a renewal of the old life but as being reborn into the family of God. It is the very necessary dividing point at which those who "were children of the devell because of the originall synne

1 'ibid' Iviii^{v}

are made children of God by baptesme."[1] Baptism is simply a sign of God's grace freely given. A symbol of the Christian's initiation into the body of Christ and thus to salvation.

> "I baptise in penance to say into a new lieff. This new lieff comith not until souch time as Christ be knowen and receavyd. Now to put on Christ, is to lyve a new lieff souch as be baptisyd must remembre, that penence and fayth presedyd this external signe and in Christ the purgacion was inwardely optaynyd before the externall signe was geven. So that there is too kindes of baptisme and booth necessari."[2]

On this issue the reformers clearly reflected the ideas of the Swiss reformers, in preference to those of Luther or the accepted doctrines of the established church. They retained the importance of the sacraments of the Church and demanded that they were treated with respect. Even Fish whose earlier polemical work strongly criticised clerical practice made no attempt to affiliate his work to the ideas of popular Lollardy, in order to win their support for the Protestant cause.

1 Simon Fish Sum 'op cit' Aviii^{r}

2 John Hooper 'ibid'

The doctrine of original sin was accepted without question. Fish based his teaching on that of Paul (Romans 8[1]), portraying Christ as the second Adam, sent by God to make men the children of light and grace, whereas the first Adam had subjected mankind to God's righteous wrath and hence to death. For where Adam acted towards God in disobedience Christ has held himself in complete obedience to all God's commandments. Christ alone had fulfilled the righteous commandments of God, no man could hope to do the same because of the frailty of human nature.

> "This we have not gotten by oure good worke, for we have yet done no good, when we were baptised. But this comyth holy bi the grace of god and by oure faith, by that we put oure hole trust in hym, and that we knowledge hī fore oure lorde and savioure. And that we did beleve all that he hath done ad suffred for us, for he dyed to make us lyve."[1]

All men could however enter into communion with God by sharing in the death of Christ. This is not a literal sharing in physical death but a symbolic sharing in baptism, and a spiritual sharing in the heart. In

1 Simon Fish - sum 'op cit' Bii[v]

baptism men partake of Christ's grace, they die and are buried with Christ, rising again to a new life after the ways of God.

> "And so is it come to oure profit that Jesus dyed for us. For the baptisme hath his vertue of the death of Jesus Christ. Then when we be baptised, we betoken that we will dye with Christ, I say, that we will dye as unto the lyfe passed as touching oure sinnes and evil concupiscences: and that as saveth S. Paule, we must walke in a new light."[1]

John Frith compared baptism with the Jewish practice of circumcision, both are unnecesary for salvation, but both are important symbols of membership of Gods chosen people. William Tyndale saw the sacrament of baptism as the outward profession of an inward faith. Similarly to Hooper he believed that there were two kinds of baptism both of which were necessary to faith. He too compared the sacrament of baptism with the Jewish act of circumcision, both of which signify God's covenant with his people.

1 'ibid' Aviii^{V}

"For as circumcision was unto them a common badge signifying that they were all souldiers of God, to warre his warre, and so separating them from all other nations, disobedient unto god even so baptisme is our comon badge, and sure earnest and perpetual memoriall, that we pertaine unto Christ and are separated frome all that are not Christs. And as circumsision was a token certifying them that they were receaved into the favour of God, and their sinnes forgeve them: even so baptisme certifieth us that we are washed in the bloud of Christ, and receaved to favour for his sake."[1]

In this way Tyndale saw a continuance of the Old Testament covenant into the new covenant inaugurated by Christ. Circumcision signified that the Jews were the chosen people, baptism signifies the same for the Christians and has therefore superseded the old covenant of circumcision.

For both Tyndale and Fish baptism was the starting point of a continual process of sanctification. It was

1 William Tyndale - Preface to the five books of Moses M de Keyser. Antwerp 1534 from J. Foxe Whole Works Diii^{v}

not the final act undertaken by a Christian once he had achieved a perfect faith. Tyndale criticised those who claimed "That Christ hath made no satissaccion for the synne we do after our baptism."[1], he presumably had in mind those extremist sects who believed that baptism should only take place when a man was on the verge of death itself. To hold thus, Tyndale believed was to misunderstand the whole meaning of the baptismal act.

> "In our baptysm we receave the merytes of Christes deeth thorow repentaune and fayth of which two baptism is the sygne. And though when we synne of frailtie after oure baptysm we receave the sygne no moare yet we be renewed agayne thorow repentaunce and faith in Christes bloude whyth twayne the sygne of baptysm ever contynued amonge us in Baptisynge oure younge children doeth ever kepe in mynde and call us backe agayne unto oure profession if we be gonne astraye and promiseth us forgevenesse."[2]

Here Tyndale touched upon a topic of much controversy,

1 William Tyndale - Preface to the prophet Jonas M de Keyser Antwerp 1531 from J. Foxe Whole Works p Ciii^{r}

2 'ibid' p Ciiii^{v}

particularly amongst continental reformers, namely that of infant baptism. For his own part Tyndale had very little difficulty in accepting this practice, after all baptism only marked the beginning of a life of faith and sanctification. Hooper on the other hand perhaps expresses a preference that the children should at least be old enough to understand what baptism means.

> "Thus be the infantes examinyd conserning repentanc and fayth before they be baptisyd with water at the comtemplacion of the which faith God purchith the soule, then in the exteriour signe and dyd not to purch the hart but to confirm manifest and open unto the world that this chyld is godes and likwyce baptisme with the repition of these wordes is a very sacrament and signe that the baptised creature shuld dy from sinne all hys lyffe."[1]

Fish eventually came out in favour of infant baptism but exhibited some difficulty in reconciling this with the idea that sacraments feed the faith of those who believe in the atoning death of Christ. He saw baptism as having a dual role in that it is a fore-sharing of God's promises to mankind, and in that it brings its

1 John Hooper Declaration of Christ 'op cit' Iv^{r}

recipients into the one body of Christ. On this basis Fish felt he could confute the arguments of the Anabaptists, that baptism should only be administered to those who have learned true repentance and amended their life accordingly.

However, having once accepted that baptism was the entry point into the Christian faith he had then to try to reconcile this with the belief that "The fayth that we have at baptisme taketh away oure sinnes, and the water is nothynge but a signe or a token."[1] Fish suggested baptism was the initiation sign of the Christian faith and as such the grounds upon which Christians identify both with Christian beliefs and with their fellow Christians. This fits in with the Augustine definition of a sacrament, and the Pauline teaching on the body of Christ. As an initiation rite baptism is accompanied by a promise. In the case of child baptism, Fish made the godparents responsible for teaching the children about their duty before God and of bringing them to a knowledge of the gospel, regardless of their intellectual standing. Fish believed that in baptism the Christian died to sin, by sharing in the death of Christ and the two fountains which flowed from his side, the blood which is the

1 Simon Fish Sum 'op cit' Bv^{V}

blood of redemption, and the water by which Christians are purified and cleansed before they are offered to the Father.

Taken at this level and applied to adult baptism alone the apparent contradictions between the efficacy of the act and the need for faith disappear. However, applied to the practice of infant baptism a number of contradictions still appear, and on this point Fish was determined to reach a compromise. In a lengthy section in which Fish recorded both his opinions and the objections of those who held otherwise he attempted to argue the case for infant baptism. Overall the argument lacks cohesion and fails to reach an adequate conclusion, reconciling the two points of view.

The author's attitude towards the issue was largely determined by his belief that baptism is a promise which is made between God and man. At baptism man receives certainty of God's promise of forgiveness towards him. In return the individual promises to follow the teachings of Christ, this promise made by man to God is totally binding and intractable. It is perfectly reasonable to expect the same loyalty from a man for whom others made the promise on his behalf, whilst he was still an infant. There was however no guarantee that the indvidual concerned would either hold the beliefs or be endowed with the faith on which

salvation is conditionally dependant. Hence, those who argue against infant baptism appear to be in a much stronger position than Fish, when they say:

> "None should be baptised before that he come to an understanding and knowledge to thintente that he might promise himselfe and forsake the devell and that he might know what thing he has promised."[1]

In answer to this Fish could only present three seemingly weak arguments. Firstly, he referred to the medieval belief that a child who died unbaptised could not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, a common belief still prevalent at this time. Secondly, he cited ideas of other reformers in order to give validity to his own. Both Luther and Zwingli were adamant that children should be baptised. His third argument attempted to reconcile the need for faith and the practice of infant baptism. Fish acknowledged that it was impossible for a child to have that faith which was necessary for his/her salvation, and thus was left with the dilemma of the actual purpose of infant baptism. If the sacrament was merely a sign of the church's acceptance of the child as a member of its body, then the child who was not baptised would surely not be

1 'ibid' Bvii^{v}

condemned, simply for the absence of time to perform a religious rite. If the act of baptism was to reiterate God's promise to the adults present or to instruct them in faith as Hooper suggested it was, then again it could not be essential to the salvation of the child.

The author recognised the difficulty and therefore imputed the efficacy of infant baptism to the faith of the adults present. In this he followed Zwingli in that baptism is seen as teaching the individual to observe the commandments of God. Tyndale too concurred upon this point, stating that baptism was the starting point from which Christians were instructed in the tenets of their faith.

According to Fish the faith of the godparents alone was sufficient to bind a man to the promises made in baptism. However, this presents the problem of the transference of the individual merit of faith from one person to another,and there is no evidence elsewhere in the author's work to suggest that he saw such a transference as possible or efficacious.

The key to understanding the teaching of both Fish and Tyndale on this point is to be found in their belief that baptism marked the beginning and not the end of the development of faith.

> "We take the faith for the beginnynge of the Christen life, but truly he that have parfaith faith the same hath not onely begonne the Christian lyfe but hath fulfilled it."[1]

Even on this point the argument remains weak, and can not really be seen as more than an attempt to give a theological basis to a difficult but long accepted tradition. In the final analysis all Fish could do was to come to an unhappy compromise on the issue of infant baptism, placing full responsibility for the promises, made therein, with the Godparents. As regards to age then the author concluded that the time of baptism is insignificant and that only the intention behind the act counts.

> "It is all one before God yf thou be ixxx yere olde, or twenty yere olde, when thou receavest the baptesme, for god regardeth not howe olde thou art, but with what purpose ad intencyon, and with whate faith thou recyvest this baptisme and grace."[2]

1 'ibid' Avi^{v}

2 'ibid' Bvi^{v}

Tyndale chose to ignore the controversies surrounding the actual baptismal practices concentrating instead on the inner baptism of the soul. The actual act of baptism he said was no more than the outward sign of a man's repentance, and as such signifieth no more than the inward repentance of the soul. Baptism then was the starting point of the christian life, the beginning of a continual process of sanctification.

> "The repentaunce and fayth begyn at our Baptisme and first professing the lawes of God and continue unto our lives end ... thus as the spirit and doctrine on God's part and repentauce and fayth in our part beget us anew in Christ even so they make us grow and wax perfect and save us unto the ende and never leave us until all sinne be put of an we cleane purified and full formed and fashioned after the similitude and lickenes of ther perfectives of our Saviour Jesus Christ."[1]

By seeing the Christian life as a process of continual sanctification Tyndale was able to overcome the

1 William Tyndale Pathwaye to the Holy Scriptures First printed 1525 Peter Quentel, Cologne, in the prologue to the New Testament - from Whole works 'op cit' p Ttv^{V}

difficulties associated with infant baptism. For if baptism symbolised the starting point of faith and not the end point then the age at which children are baptised was insignificant. Besides, baptism by water was only a symbol of the inner baptism of the soul. This inner baptism alone is the true baptism of the Holy Spirit in it Christians profess the true doctrines of their faith.

Tyndale believed that this all important profession of faith should be taught to all those who were baptised at an early age, for this baptism "is the key that byndeth and lowseth, lockyth and unlockyth, the consciense of all synners even so that lessone, wher it is understonde is only the keye that openyth all the scripture."[1] He was, however, very aware that many people remained ignorant of this profession of their baptism, and he blamed the inadequacy of the clergy for this deficiency in learning. For if the prelates themselves had no understanding of the scriptures, then how could they be expected to teach the people the true word of God.

1 William Tyndale - Prologue to the exposition of the 1st Epistle of St. John. Antwerp M. de Keyser 1531 Aiv^{r}

Therefore, on account of the prelates weakness, many of those baptised into the church never came to understand God's word. However, this problem did not exist for those who have been truly baptised by the Spirit, for this same spirit gave them an understanding of the scriptures, which far surpassed that of the prelates. For inner baptism guaranteed that its recipients would never be open to the possibility of misinterpreting the scriptures

> "As he which ever crepith alonge by the grownde and never clymneth cannot fal frae on hie. Even so no man that hath the profession of his baptysm writen in his harte, can stomble in the scripture, and fal into heresies or become a maker of division and sektes and a defendre of wylde and vayne opinions."[1]

For Tyndale this true profession of the faith was two fold, primarily it consisted acknowledging and believing in God's promise of mercy through the saving act of Christ, and secondly, in submission to God's good and righteous law as a measure of how to live a Christian life. The latter of course presupposed that all had access to God's law through the scriptures,and hence

1 'ibid' Aiv^{V}

accounts for Tyndale's determination that the scriptures should be published in English and made freely available to the people.

There can be little doubt that the few English reformers who chose to explain the cause and significance of this difficult area were influenced greatly by the continental reformers, whose own efforts had been seriously challenged by the ideas of the Anabaptists. Fish for instance was strongly influenced by both Lutheran and Swiss ideas. This influence is apparent in his insistence that unbaptised children are not saved, and that therefore by implication baptism is more than a simple ritual.

The ideas of Hooper, Frith and Tyndale upon this point are more closely akin to the teaching of the Swiss reformers. In that they hold that baptism is simply a sign which signifies membership of God's church, and of a second and more important inner baptism. Fish also partially subscribes to this view resulting in the creation of an unresolved conflict of ideas upon the efficacy of the sacramment within its own right.

The works of Frith and Hooper also exhibit some traces of Lollard concern over the sacrament, in as much as they deny that holy water is a necessary feature of the baptismal service. However, despite their

expressions of doubt concerning the use of Holy Water, or the need for a strict adherence to any particular form of service, neither went as far as the Lollards who claimed that baptism was equally effective whether carried out at the hands of a priest or a layman. They were of course ever mindful of the need to show that reforming opinion presented no threat to the establishment, and baptism was one issue upon which they had no real disagreement with the established church.

SECTION E

ANTI-ECCLESIASTICAL LITERATURE

I REPUBLISHED LOLLARD WORKS

The works dealing with anti-clericalism can be roughly divided into three categories. The first and most clear cut consisting of Lollard works, which were reprinted during the early 1530's. Margaret Aston[1] states that by the mid 1500's, English readers had access to at least ten of these reprinted texts, whose content varied greatly, covering a few of the leading religious issues of the time.

Of these ten Lollard books, four were published in Antwerp, within the space of a year. One headed "the examination of Master William Thorpe priest accused of heresy, or the examination of Sir John Oldcastell", gave an account of the trials of the two Lollard martyrs. R.Steele identifies this work as coming from the press of J.Hoochstraten. He also suggests that its publication is due to the efforts of Joye or Roy, who sought to give antiquity to the reforming movement. Alongside Wyclif both Thorpe and Oldcastell were elevated to the status of Lollard martyrs, just men who

1 Margaret Aston. Lollards and Reformers. Images and literacy in late Medieval Religion (London 1984)

died because they spoke the truth.

Two of the other works "A compendious olde treatyse shewing how we ought to have the scriptures in Englishe" and "A proper dialogue between a gentillman and a husbandman", bear the colophon "Marlborow in the lãde of Hessen, by me Hans Luft". However, Duff[2] holds that many of the English books which bear Luft's name can only be doubtfully ascribed to him, and that it is, therefore, impossible to accurately place either the true name of the publisher or the location of the press. Steele[3], however, attributes at least the former work to the Antwerp press of J. Hoochstraten, on the basis of the typeface which is employed.

As concerning the authorship of the two works the former has been identified as John Purves' 'Defence of the vernacular Bible', whilst the editorial work on the latter is thought to be that of William Roy, because of its similarities to his work 'Rede me and be not Wrothe'.

1 R. Steele 'op cit'

2 G. Duff 'op cit'

3 R. Steele 'op cit'

The remaining Lollard work, 'The Praier and Coplaint of the Plowman unto Christ', is thought to have been edited by either William Tyndale or George Joye, and printed at the press of Martin de Keyser in 1531. The tract is describedby its editor as 'written not longe after the yere of oure Lorde a MCCCL in his owne olde englysshe."[1] However, by dating the work thus, the editor is allocating its origins to a period before the advent of either Wyclif or his Lollard followers. However, upon closer examination, the tract itself can be seen to express many of the popular Lollard sentiments of the subsequent century and therefore, it seems that the editor is mistaken with his proffered dating.

This error of judgement in no way belittles the importance of the works as it is not the date but rather the sentiments expressed which are of importance. As a whole the work presents a concise but almost complete critique of clerical abuses and lay dissatisfaction,covering as it does not only tithes and clerical wealth but the whole question of papal and priestly power. All of the common Lollard elements

1 George Joye and William Tyndale 'Praier and Complaint of a Plowman unto Christ M de Keyser Antwerp 1531 p Aiii^{V}

are present: the denial of the need for confession to a priest, the payment of tithes, transubstantiation, the need for clerical celibacy, the efficacy of pardons and indulgences, and the right of the clergy to temporal power.

Margaret Aston[1] also suggests, that a further work of Roy, ('Rede me and be not wrothe') may also have been based upon a fourteenth century Lollard poem which is now lost.

This work which is written in a series of seven line stanzas, bears a remarkable resemblance to the introductory format of Lufts' 'Dialogue between a gentillman and husbandman'. It too comprises of a dialogue, this time between two servants of a member of the clergy who attack the usual clerical inadequacies and acknowledge both the need for reform, and its inevitability as evidenced in Germany. Even if Roy's work, is not based on a Lollard poem, it is clear that the author has been greatly influenced by Lollard ideas. The clergy, their ceremonies, and claims to power are all dismissed as worthless to the true Christian.

1 Margaret Aston 'op cit'

"It is of a treueth they are dedde
for they are in no use nor stedde
To Christen mens consolacion
And as a dedde stynkynge carcase
Unproffitably cloyeth a space
Yf it be kepte above grownde
so in their lyfe supersticious
Of wicked crymes enormous
No maner proffitableness is fownde"1

Again certain issues are singled out for special mention, and together these culminate in a thorough condemnation of the established clergy, along with the ceremonies of the church and papal authority.

Tracts such as these were reprinted by the advocates of reform because in many ways they anticipated the reforming movement. Other Lollard tracts probably proved less suitable due to their more eccentric nature or their complete denial of the need for any form of institutionalised religion. In contrast the ideas contained within these four tracts, once subjected to the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith,

1 William Roy - 'Rede me and be not wrothe for I say no thynge but trothe' J Shoot, Strassburg 1528 p Ciii^{v}

took on a new significance, as a practical expression of this all embracing Protestant belief. In this context Lollard attacks on images, purgatory, auricular confession, papal authority, and the sale of indulgences, could all be subsumed into the Protestant Reformation, since all these denied the fundamental tenet of justification by faith alone.

> "Lorde what herieng is it to knele to fore mōumēts that now not y heren, and worshippe hem with prayer, and maken thyne quyck ymages to knele before hem and asken of hem absolucions and blessynges and worshippen hem as Goddes, and putteen thy quycke ymages in thraldome and in traveyle evermore."[1]

Similarly, there was very little difficulty in accommodating Lollard demands for the vernacular scriptures and their associated belief that all should be allowed open access to the word of God, both through personal study and educated instruction.

> "It ought to be trāslatyd to Englyshe, people that have recivyd the faythe and bounded themselfe to

1 George Joye and William Tyndale Praier 'op cit' Ciii^{r}

kepe it upon payne of dampnacion, sythen. Christ commaunded his Apostles to preache his gospell in all the worlde and exceptid no people nor language."[1]

Additionally, men like Roy, Joye and Tyndale, recognised the advantages that such a policy would bring to their cause. They too held that the Bible contained the word of God, and that all should be judged by it. With this belief came the certainty that once the people understood God's word, the demands for reform would not be long in following. In the light of the Scriptures the abuses of the established church would be only too clear. The Lollard tracts were also used as a means by which to voice disapproval, of issues such as purgatory and indulgences, matters which received little mention in the more theologically orientated works. Lollardy had always appealed to the common people, and republished Lollard works first subjected to careful editing could easily be assimilated into the Protestant cause.

1 A Compendious Olde treatyse shewynge howe that we ought to have the scriptures in English - Hans Luft. Marburg [really J. Hoochstraten - Antwerp] 1530 p Avii^{v}

Therefore, when the writer of the 'Praier and Complaint of a Plowman unto Christ' condemned auricular confession because it detracted from Gods grace, the early protestants would have found no difficulties in identifying with the sentiment that "God is moche unworshipped thereby, for men trust more in his [priests] absolucions, and in his yeres of grace, than in christes absolucions, and thereby is the people moch apayred."[1]

Not all Lollards tracts of course were concerned with doctrinal issues. Much of their attention was focused on clerical wealth, and in fact their rejection of the priesthood and its functions were in the main largely due to the resentment they felt towards clerical charges. In contrast for the reformers it was of course the doctrinal error which was of paramount importance. That is not to say that some of England's early Protestants did not sympathise with the Lollards resentment of clerical wealth for they too attacked the wealth of the church. However, again this too was simply part of the larger issue of the need to return to the precepts of New Testament Christianity, where Christs church lived in poverty dedicated to the

1 George Joye and William Tyndale - Praier 'op cit' Biv^{r}

service of others.

> "And so as Christes workes bere witnesse of hym, as he hym selfe sayeth and sheweth what he was and howe he lyved so the dedes and maner of lyvinge or the thynge in itself bearyth wytnesse withoute fayle, howe it standyth among theym in thys poynte. And yf we take hede thus by thys rule we shall se at oure eye howe the clergye sayeth other wyse that it is indede."[1]

Early Protestants such as Simon Fish[2] also seized upon the idea of clerical wealth as a useful basis from which to attack the established church, belittling its spiritual status. In many cases[3] the wealth and temporal power of the church was especially exaggerated for the benefit of Henry VIII. Thus the reformers sought to prompt Henry to instigate the desired reform.

1 A proper dialogue between a gentileman and a husbandman. H.Luft Marburg/Antwerp 1530 Bv^{v}

2 Simon Fish Supplication, Robert Barnes Supplication 1531, Henry Stalybridge Epistle Exhoratorye.

3 George Joye and William Tyndale Praier 'op cit' E^{r}

Lollard concern over church wealth also had social implications for society as a whole. Their condemnation of wealth and advocation that the church had a duty to help the poor at times seemed directed towards the ends of social upheaval.

> "Howe dare anyman geve the of the worst, and kepe to himselfe the best? Howe mowe suche men saye that they have gatheren rychese for others nede as well as hem selfe, fythe her workes be contrarye to her wordes. And that is no great truthe."[1]

The reformers in contrast had no intentions of bringing about social reform, rather they went out of their way, to show that the Reformation was favourable to the already existing order. The reformers ever mindful of the peasants revolt in Germany, were careful to remind their followers of the need for civil obedience. Henry VIII also aware of the potential dangers of the vernacular Bible was reluctant to take the risks involved, and so he progressed slowly towards any such reform.

1 George Joye and William Tyndale Praier 'op cit' E^r

The Lollards, who had always advocated the use of the vernacular Bible, and who had circulated it, either in part or whole amongst their brethren, had not failed to realise its social implications. They had, however, after the Oldcastle rising never been sufficiently united to present any real threat to the established order. Events in Germany had declared the potential danger of reforming ideas. Both Henry and the reformers were determined that there would be no such repetition in England. Therefore, Lollard ideas which showed radical tendencies received no credence within the Protestant cause and such works were disregarded by those who sought out and reprinted Lollard works.

The re-publication and revitalisation of selected Lollard texts by known adherents of the Reformation, bears witness to the reformers willingness to build upon already existent national traditions. This does not however, mean that they were willing to compromise their theological beliefs in favour of clerical polemic. After the demise of Lollardy in the universities, the philosophical realism and doctrinal basis for many of Wyclif's attacks on the established church were largely forgotten. In their place the Lollards had developed a strong resentment of the church on the basis of its wealth and financial demands. In fact many of these Lollard beliefs, which

the reformers found so appealing, probably developed out of a reluctance to pay the requisite church dues.

> "The prestes sellen forgiveness of menes synnes and absolucyons for money, and this is a heresye accursed, that is yelped symanye, and all thylke prestes that axeth price for grauntynge of spiritual grace, both by holy lawes deprived of ther presthod, and thylke that assenteth to his heresye."[1]

The reformers on the other hand, whilst readily agreeing with the Lollards sentiments used the teaching of the scriptures in their denial of priestly absolution, the major concern being not that money changed hands but rather that it was unnecessary as God alone absolved sin in response to the individual approach. The ideas however, remain the same despite their probable origins, and the reformers saw within the Lollard tracts a basis on which they could expound their own ideas.

Additionally Lollard tracts had the useful quality, of conferring the status of antiquity upon reforming ideas. Englands early Protestants were very concerned

1 'ibid' Biv^{r}

to show that their beliefs were not newly invented novelties but that they had their roots in the ideas of the past. The idea of continuity was of prime importance, as it gave testimony to the native origin of reforming ideas and diminished the tendency to regard the Reformation as a continental phenomenon which a handful sought to impose, upon the English populace.

The editor of the 'Praier and Complaint of the Plowman unto Christ' goes to a great trouble to show, that such beliefs have been held for over two centuries.

> "Nowe good reder, that thou mayst se playnly that it its no newe thyng, but an old practyse of oure prelates lerned of their fathers the bysshops, pharyses and prestes of the olde lawe, to defame the doctrine of Christ with the name of new masters. I have put forth here in print this praier and complaynt of the plowman which was written not longe after the yere of oure lorde a MXLLL in his own olde English."[1]

Thus the Lollard works serve a dual purpose, in that they give antiquity to the Protestant beliefs, and also

1 'ibid' Aiii^{V}

provide them with an historical link with England's past. They also served to show that the present wave of persecution was only to be expected in view of the events of the past. Lollard leaders were also assigned a special place. The re-publication of trial accounts for Thorpe and Oldcastle and the portrayal of Wyclif as the victim of clerical malice, elevated these three important Lollards to the status of martyrs, who died because they spoke the truth.

> "Against the good knight Sir John Oldcastle otherwise called Lorde of Cobham. That from hygh heresye unto treasone, they brought hym to fynall destruction with other many a noble man."[1]

Therefore, it was not only within the sphere of belief that there was continuity between the two movements, but also within the response provoked by the established church. It was partially for this purpose that the '<u>Compendious olde treatyse</u>' was re-printed in 1530. This is made clear by the words of the introduction.

> "That ye may knowe yt is only the inwarde malcye whiche they have ever had ageynst the worde of God.

1 <u>A proper dialogue</u> 'op cit' Bi^{V}

> I have here put in prynte a treatyse wrytten aboute ye yeare of oure lorde a thousande ande foure hundryd. By which thou shalte playnly perceyve yt they wolde yet never from the begynnynge admytte any translacion to ye laye people so yt is not ye corrupte translacion may withstande, for yf that were true. They ydle bestyes wolde have had leyser inough to put forth another well translated."[1]

The records of continual persecution also helped to encourage those who now found themselves subject to persecution. Lollard survival serving as an example and encouragement to perseverance.

Thus, selected Lollard texts proved useful in advancing the cause of the Reformation. They were however, never left without an appropriate introduction stating the purpose of their publication, and expressing appropriate Protestant sympathies. Often there was also a need to change archaic words as the editor of the '<u>Praier and Complaint</u>' found, when he wrote that he had published the work "chaungynge therein nothin as far forthe as I could obscure it, other the englyshe or ortographye, addynge also therto a table of such olde wordes as be nowe antyquate and worne out of knowlege

1 <u>Compendious Olde Treatyse</u> 'op cit' Ai^r

by processe of tyme."[1]

However, on the whole these Lollard tracts needed little in the way of change as the sentiments they expressed were as suitable to the sixteenth century as they had been for their original readers, for example the 'Compendious Olde Treatyse' proved to be ideally suited to the purpose of the reformers. The original author of the tract sought to prove, by biblical and historical examples, that the common people should be given open access to the vernacular scriptures. His arguments which were valid then were equally applicable in 1531, as the church had failed to institute any significant changes into its policies. Additionally the arguments he presented were particularly appropriate to the aims of the reformers, in that he gave the weight of antiquity to his argument by the citing of numerous and varied authorities. By the sixteenth century the demands, methodology and reasons for reform remained largely unchanged. The author of the Compendious Olde Treatyse' sums up the cause and purpose of his writing to prove that "both men and women lawfully may reade and wryte godes lawe in their mother tonge". He adds that he also intends to show that those who seek to prevent this are "the

1 George Joye and William Tyndale Praier Aiii^{V}

veraye disciples of anti christ which hathe and shall passe all malyce of tyrauntes that have ben before, in stoppyng and pervertynge of gods lawe which deade engendrythe greate vengence to full in this realme."[1]

Writing in 1543, William Turner could still point to the clergy's refusal to allow free access to the vernacular scriptures, as one of the great abuses of his age.

> "Howe happeneth thys that nether ye will rede the scripture in the Englysshe tonge your selves to the lay people nether will ye suffer then that can rede the scripture to rede it for theyr soules helth and great comforte of other that heave it red. It is without all strife and owt of all dout, that he love not Christe and wolde that all the laye men were blynde and had no knowledge of scripture no more then they had XX yere ago, that ye myght playe youre olde prachses and have no man to loke onto corect yowe."[2]

1 Compendious olde treatyse Aviii^{r}

2 William Turner - The Hyntyng and fyndyng out of the Romysche Foxe Basyl [really S. Meirdman Antwerp] 1543 p Ciii^{r}

The right of the common people to have access to the scriptures in their native tongue, became an essential component of the Protestant faith, and for this reason ancient Lollard texts were eagerly siezed upon, to defend and advance the Protestant cause.

Additionally, when they republished ancient Lollard texts they utilised their potential for gaining the support of surviving Lollard groups, which could make an important contribution to the propagation of reforming ideas. In fact many of those who helped to finance the printing and importing of Protestant books, through the Christian Brethren were probably themselves Lollard sympathisers. Thus by showing the continuity between Lollard teaching and their own these reformers were helping to ensure the adoption of Protestant ideas, by groups whose infrastructure was ideally suited to the spread of forbidden ideas and the circulation of prohibited books. Lollard groups, which had managed to survive by keeping a low profile were in an ideal position to make an important contribution to the Reformation. Reformers, like Tyndale and Joye, helped to harness this potential and revitalise it, directing it towards the benefit of their own cause.

It would be wrong however, to suppose that the Lollards were totally assimilated into the reform movement. Some sects continued to survive, maintaining

their own ideas, with their anti-sacerdotal and sacramentarian views. These groups were in many ways, closer to the Anabaptist movement, than to the predominant Protestant reform movement. In England, Lollard ideas and writings were adopted and adapted in so far as they fitted in with the doctrines of reform. Lollardy which often thrived on extremes was in its entirety an unsuitable medium for the propagation of Protestant ideas. It was only once it had been carefully scrutinised and its doctrinal extremes removed that it became both a useful and productive vehicle of reform.

II PROTESTANT ANTI-CLERICALISM

This second category of works consists of those texts, which can be loosely linked together, through their critical attitudes towards the established church. These tracts are unique in that they successfully combine both Lollard anti-clericalism, and Protestant doctrine, probably with the aim of appealing to both those sections of society which had been most closely involved with Lollardy, and to the wider section of society which criticised the contemporary church, for its abuses and financial demands. The very nature of these tracts made them eminently suitable, firstly to draw forth the sympathy of their readers through the medium of resentment, and then to progressively lead them towards a basic knowledge of Protestant theology, which would lay the foundations for further teaching.

Many of the reforming works combine together these two aspects of anti-clericalism and Protestant theology. Of these the following three are excellent examples of this type of work: Robert Barnes 'Supplication to Henry VIII', Henry Stalybridge's 'Epistle Exhoratory', and Simon Fish's 'Supplication for the beggars'.

All three works cover a wide range of topics from the negligible moral standards of the clergy to the authority of the Pope and the prohibition of preaching. The dominant nature of the polemical anti-clericalism, which is to be found in these works, is far more characteristic of English Lollardy than of continental Protestantism. Its very presence indicates that these authors were probably greatly influenced by the anti-clerical sentiments of Englands native Lollards.

In one of the earliest tracts to be published in English Simon Fish set down a clear expression of the religious criticisms of the common people. The Supplication for the Beggars, is a polemical work, which is highly critical of the practices and wealth of the English clergy. Written in the form of a plea for the poor and needy and addressed to Henry VIII it is designed to gain the monarchs support by a localised attack on matters of church and state within the English realm.

The tract opens with a cry of despondency, an echo of popular opinion on behalf of the genuine beggars, namely the 'needy, impotent, blind and lame'. The people, Fish claims, are dying of hunger because there are not suffcient alms to feed them all. The blame for this shortage is placed wholly upon the clergy those "Strong plus saint and counterfeit, holy and ydell

beggers and vagabundes."[1] It is not only the friars who have strayed from the ideals of a religious life but the whole church. This forms the main and recurring theme of the work. The church has become far too wealthy, it has deserted its original precepts of poverty and humility in its prepossession for increasing material wealth and power, a theme which also receives equal attention in the works of the other writers.

In their arguments they are supported by the wealth of medieval tradition and a value system in which poverty was proclaimed as the highest expression of the religious life. To pious lay men throughout the centuries, nothing could be further from this ideal than the church's overwhelming display of wealth, and the constant interference in political affairs, a policy which made the life of her office bearers more akin to that of the temporal powers, than to the imitation of her founder Christ.

> "Never came ye in with your myters robes,and rynges by the dore as ded the poore Apostles, but in by the wyndowe unrequired lyke robbers, theves and manquellers ... Never was your proude

1 Simon Fish - supplication - 'op cit' Cviii^{r}

pontificall power of the heavenlye fathers plantynge, and therefore at the last it must up by the rootes, ye must in the end be destroyed without handes."[1]

Increasing wealth accompanied by clerical corruption and neglection of priestly duties caused many to question the nature of the church and to demand that the church be cleansed from her sins. The blame for the state of the church was firmly placed upon her accumulation of wealth. It was claimed that the increasing corruption of the church could be blamed on worldliness and avarice, a state of decline which had begun in the time of Silvester. The church had deserted its true function of spirituality in the pursuit of earthly lordship. Not content with its assigned role it sought to possess both the spiritual and temporal swords of power. The removal of temporal lordship from the clergy was seen as a service to the church, designed to restore it to its rightful domain as the true servant of Christ.

1 Henry Stalybridge [John Bale] The Epistle Exhoratorye of an English Christian unto his deresye beloved countreye of Englande. Basyle 1544 p Biiii^{r}

In attacking the increasing materialism of the church the reformers were not therefore, providing their audience with an original or unusual argument against the church hierarchy, but merely echoing the voices of those who called for reform in the past. The special appeal of these works lies in the authors ability to take a general critism and to shape it into a narrow and direct attack upon the ecclesiastical situation in England.

> "Thou knowest well what his (Wolsey) lyfe is
> Unto all people greatly detestable
> He causeth many one to do amisse
> Thorow his example abhominable
> Wherefore it is nothynge reprobable
> To declare his mischief and whordom."[1]

In this way they faithfully echo the sentiments of their lay readership. According to these reformers, the church unjustly increased its wealth, in three ways by tithes, payment of services, and through donations to the monastic orders. Here too they can find a precedent in the ideas of the Lollards. Despite the fragmented nature of this movement as a whole, one thing which comes over very clearly, as a basic tenet

1 Willima Roy 'op cit' Avi[V]

of Lollard belief is the refusal to pay the customary tithes to the church. A.G. Dickens[1] cites two such examples from the diocese of York. Ecclesiastical records show that amongst the heretical propositions held by Lambert Hooke and Gyles Van Beller, numbered the denial that tithes and obligations were due to the church and should be paid at all times.

D. Baker[2] found the same trait amongst the heretics of Lincoln. The Lollards, he writes, stated that:

> "It was unlawful for priests to accept stipends for celebrating divine offices and oblations made for marriages and burials were accounted simony."

The clergy had then for long been accounted as greedy and unworthy recipients of the people's respect and honour. They had, however, survived all attacks upon the church, because they were indispensable in bringing God's salvation to men.

1 A.G. Dickens - Lollards and Protestants in the diocese of York 1509-58 (London 1959)

2 D. Baker - Bishop Buckingham and the Lollards of the Lincoln diocese Studies in Church History vol 9

Gradually the walls were broken down. Firstly, by Wyclif who denied their necessity to perform the miracle of transubstantiation in the mass, and secondly, by the increasing denial of papal claims to the power of binding and loosing.

By the early sixteeth century, some of the clergy were also calling for reform. William Melton, Chancellor of York, was one such member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In a sermon published by William de Worde circa 1510, he addressed ordinands in the diocese of York with the following words:

> "We must avoid and keep from ourselves that grasping, deadly plague of avarice for which practically every priest is accused, and held in disrepute before the people, when it is said that we are greedy for rich promotions or harsh and grasping in retaining or amassing money, and spend little or nothing on works of piety."[1]

The sober warning of Melton concerning the moral and spiritual decline of the priesthood was faithfully echoed by Simon Fish when he referred to the clergy as

1 William Melton Sermo Exhortatoruis Cancelarii Ebor [acencis] Dickens 'op cit'

"This idell ruinous sort which setting all laboure aside have begged so importunately that they have gotten into theyre hande more than a third part of all youre realme. The goodliest lordshoppes , maners, landes and territories are theyrs."[1]

At no point was the corruption of the clergy called into question. It was an accepted fact that parish priests were often illiterate and immoral. The claim that the church owned more than a third part of the realm, is probably an echo of popular mis-informed opinion, designed to raise the indignation of the people against the clergy, of whom Fish also claimed "look so narrowly uppon theyre profittes that the poure wyves must be countable to theym of every tenth egg or elles she gettith not her ryghtes and after shal be taken as an heretike."[2]. Again the situation has been exaggerated. Although recorded evidence of heresy often alludes to the failure to pay tithes, instances of condemnation are always based on accompanying and far weightier matters of ecclesiastical denial, for example, the complete abnegation of the church's role in spiritual matters, or a denial of the mass. Such a small and isolated matter would be better and easier dealt with by other

1 Simon Fish 'op cit' Ciii^{v}

2 'ibid' Cviii^{v}

less severe means. It should also be remembered that England remained remarkably free from heresy during the middle ages, and that the church attained a considerable amount of freedom from papal power by the Statutes of Provisors of Praemunire.

Despite its independence and degree of freedom from Rome, the English church was little better in its state of morality and policies of corruption, designed to obtain financial gain at every opportunity.

> "All that you do is clerely done for monny and for no nother cause. Rekken one thynge that yoo doo as consernynge youre mynistracyon but that you wille have mony for yt. Rekken one thynge that you doo as consernynge youre mynistracyon but that you wille have mony for yt, not so muche as wasshynge of a hepe of stonnes, where by have you gotten alle youre great possessions, but alonly under the collour, yt you be Christes holy bisshops.,"[1]

The attack not only on tithes but also on levies of money for the services of the church, equates these writings still further with those of the Lollards. The criticism here is one which attacked the whole

1 Robert Barnes 'op cit' Kvi[V]

ecclesiastical organisation, for to withdraw tithes or to refuse to pay for the services of the church, was to withdraw the livelihood of its priests. However, the real basis of discontent was not that the clergy should be denied a stipend, but rather the avaricious way in which they dealt with the salvation of men's souls. The church was criticised because it placed more emphasis on material gain, than on genuine concern for the spiritual state of the congregation, even to the extent that payment was also demanded for the "halowing of churches altares, chapells and belles, by cursing of men and absolving them again for money? What a mulitude of money gather the pardoners in a yere."[1]

The established church which was attacked upon financial grounds was held to be none other than the church of the Antichrist, embracing all holy orders from the monastery to the parish priest. The attack went much further than a mere expression of material grievances but called into question the entire purpose and function of the established church, refuting its claims to lead men towards heavenly reward. In the true tradition of apocalyptic and millenarian tradition the earthly church was equated with the rule of Anti-christ. Its leaders were portrayed as the embodiment

1 Simon Fish, Supplication 'op cit' Cviii^{V}

of the spirit prophesied in the New Testament not as God's spokesmen on earth but rather as 'the reivinous wolves going in herdes clothing and devouring the flocke.'[1]. The established church was assigned the role of fulfilling Christ's apocalyptic prophecy, and at its head the Pope was envisaged as the chief servant of the Antichrist.

> "Though the Pope of Rome your olde gloriouse grandefyre were the great Anti Christ of Europa. By youre owne consent and graunt. Yet are his fylthye tradicions holye, his beggerlye ceremoneis godlye, and his croked canon lawes laudable, convenient, and comelye, precyouse, fyt, and necessary to be fyll admitted for the spirituall lawes of the churche of Englande, and for the true worshyppynes of God therin."[2]

Even in 1544, reformers like Stalybridge and Turner still saw the continuing influence of papal authority within the English church, hence their condemnation of Stephen Gardiner and his followers, who were seen as conspiring to restore the Pope to his rightful place within the English church. Thus the established church

1 'ibid' Cviii^{r}

2 Henry Stalybridge 'op cit' Aiv^{r}

was condemned on a threefold basis, that of wealth, immorality, and temporal power. Each was held to have played a vital part in the downfall of the church. Each too required remedy, if not at the request then at the hands of the temporal power. It was for this reason that men like Simon Fish addressed their work directly to Henry, in the knowledge that he alone could bring about reform. Their attacks upon the corruption of the clergy and upholding of the jurisdiction of the temporal power over all the subjects of the realm, made them a potentially valuable ally for Henry should he enter into conflict with Rome. It was for this reason that Fish was afforded Henry's protection, after the latter had read '<u>A Supplication for the Beggars</u>'. Such anti-clerical works held a great appeal for Henry, as they gave him a justifiable basis from which to attack the church, whilst at the same time an opportunity to extend his personal power. Theological changes were to possess less appeal, and the reformers were to be disappointed by Henry's response in this field.

Anti-clerical tracts then were of importance to the reformers for a number of reasons. Firstly, they served to gain the initial support of the ordinary people who had little interest in theological reform. Their concentration upon the wealth of the church, the

abuse of clerical power, clerical avarice and immorality, touched on the practical and most obvious aspects requiring reform.

They also heightened the people's, and more especially Henry's awareness of the political dangers of clerical wealth, the inalienability of clerical lands, and clerical claims to temporal power. Church claims to clerical exemption from temporal laws had long been the issue of frequent and heated dispute, since neither government nor people wished to see the continuance of this privilege which was so jealously guarded by the clergy.

Thus all such criticisms were generally welcomed by both these sections of the population, as were the calls for practical reforms, and the vesting of the necessary power with the temporal lord.

> "I reaken it therfore hygh tyme for all those Christen princes, which pretende to receyve the gospell of salvacyon, and accordyglye after that to lyve in mutuall peace and tranqyuillite, for ever to cast ye out of thyr prevye cousels, and utterlye to seclude you from all administracions, tyll soche tyme as they fynde ye no longer wolves,

but faythfull readers, no destroyers but gentyll teachers."[1]

Anti-clerical works were partially the by-product of persecution. The failure of the church to reform, and its continued persecution of the Protestants naturally provoked a hostile response. Persecution was, therefore, seen as little more than the continuation of a process which had its roots in antiquity. It was the natural response of Antichrist's servants to the Gospel of Christ, and those who sought either to faithfully follow it or preach it. In contrast Protestant martyrs, such as Frith and Tyndale, were exalted examples of true Christians who died because of the clergy's malice. William Roy gives the following account of the death of Richard Hunne who was found dead whilst awaiting trial for heresy.

"Out of this lyfe they did hym trymme
Because he was goddis servaunte."

"He did some faulte greatly notary?"

1 Henry Stalybridge 'op cit' Biii^{r}

"No thyne but for a mortuary
The prestes agaynst hym did aryse
No maner faulte in hym was fownnde
Yet he was hanted, brent and drowde.
His goodes taken up for a pryse
As an herityke they hym toke
Because he had many a boke
The englysshe of holy scripture."[1]

Thus anti-clerical works helped to confirm the Protestant belief in the certainty of their cause, and to encourage them in the face of continuing persecution.

Their exclusion from the established church, and its continuing abuses, directed the Protestants towards a new definition of the church along scriptural lines. Moving away from the narrow confines of institutionalism and ceremonial, Barnes extended his definiton to embrace "that congregacion that is sanctyfied in sprete, redemed with Christes bloud and stykkth fast and suer alonly to the promissis that he made theryn."[2]

1 William Roy 'op cit' Hii^{v}

2 Robert Barnes 'op cit' Hiv^{r}

In the thought of Barnes and his contemporaries, the church as a visible entity ceased to exist, except in so far as it conformed to the precepts of the gospel. The reformers envisaged a revitalised church which conformed to the example of Christ and his apostles. A church in which evangelical poverty was inseparable from the true priesthood, and which once cleansed from its abuses truly imaged the early church.

On these grounds, the established church, with its well defined hierarchy, ceremonies and traditions, became the very expression of the Antichrist with an appropriately assigned mission of deceit and destruction.

> "The holy churche is the congregacion of the faithefulle men where so ever they be in the world. And net the pope, nor yet his cardynallys be more this church or of this church than the poorest man in erthie, for this churche standeth alonly in the sprirtual faith of Christ Jesus and not in dignyties nor honoures of the world."[1]

In practical terms this doctrine undermined the authority of the established church. If the church

1 'ibid' Hiv^{V}

truly consisted of "the congregacion of the faithfulle men that be gathered in Christes name."[1] then there was no need for the offices of church, or the recognition of the church's authority, and that of those who claimed to exercise it. Additionally priest, bishop, cardinal and pope could no longer claim membership of this body by sole virtue of their office, but only in so far as their lives conformed to the precepts of the Gospel and the early church.

> "Though the soule of a man in hys selfe be sprirtualle and invisible yet may we have suer token of his presence, as herynge, movynge, spekynge, cunellynge, with suche other solytke use where the word of God is trewely and perfytly preached without the damnable dreames of men, and where yt is we ile of ye herars reseaved, and also where we se good workes that do openly agre wyth the doctrine of the gospell these be good and suer tokens whereby that we may iudge that there be some men of holye churche."[2]

Barnes, Hooper, Turner, Tyndale, Tracy and Fish, all took the apostolic life of poverty and preaching as the

1 'ibid' Hvi^{v}

2 'ibid' I^{v}

basis of the spiritual domain. God's word, properly comprehended became the only judge of the Christian life. Thus the radical re-orientation of priestly duty, away from the sacramental, towards the centrality of biblical exposition, and the insistence that the ordinary people should have an adequate knowledge and understanding of biblical teaching.

> "To preache the gospell therefore (most gracyouse and prudente lorde) is the trewe vocacyon and offyce of all godly Bishops, Parsons, vycars, and of other shepherdes, ... and therefore they shoulde not exercyse any other offyce than God hath appoynted to them."[1]

This doctrine had serious implications for the church, all priests who failed in their duty to preach, could no longer be accounted as true priests, but rather representatives of Antichrist. Further, if the scriptures were accepted as the sole verification of God's truth, it opened the way for different interpretations of the scriptures, amongst both groups and individuals, and thus presented church unity with its most serious challenge.

1 William Tracey 'op cit' Cviii^{V}

Calls upon the king to expropriate church wealth and obliterate its temporal powers, stemmed from the reformers' desire to restore the church to its pre-Constantinian state. The doctrine itself was not peculiar to the reforming age. Wyclif too had sought the disendowment of the church on scriptural grounds. He had, however, gone further than this challenging the very need for its existence at all. This was the logical consequence of his belief that the true members of the church are bound together in the eternal bond of election, devoid of any individual merits.

The reformers issued no such challenge to the existence of the visible church. They acknowledged the validity of its position in the Christian faith, and desired its revivification and reform rather that its destruction.

Additionally, Wyclif's doctrine was anti-sacramental. This too is lacking in the thought of the early reformers, for although they denied the 'ex opere operato' efficacy of the seven sacraments, they continued to uphold both baptism and communion as important and necessary elements of the Christian faith. "The Communewealthe of the trewe church" according to Hooper "is knowyn by these two markes, the pure preaching of the gospell and the right use of

the Sacramentes."[1]

The reformers vision of a Christian state and a Christian church could not come to fruition until the power of the contemporary church was broken, and its abuses cleansed. This in turn could only come about through the sympathetic and direct action of Henry VIII in accordance with the principles of the New Testament.

It would, however, be wrong to suppose that all the anti-clerical works published at this time were simply an extension of Lollard ideas. A third category of such works, tend to be more individually stylised. These often concentrate on just one or two aspects of clerical abuse. For example, James Sawtry's 'Defence of the Marriage of Prests', or John Friths 'Disputation of Purgatory'. Others are the result of reforming opposition to a specific member of the clergy, or to a development in the contemporary situation. Two such examples being Turners "Huntyng and fyndyng out of the Romyshe Foxe" published in 1543, and its sister work of two years later 'The seconde course at the Romishe Fox, and his advocate and sworne patrone Steven Gardiner,

1 John Hooper - Declaration of Christ 'op cit' p Kvi^{v}

doctor and defender of the Popes canon law and his ungodly ceremonies'. By the mid 1540's Gardiner had become a focus of the reformer's hostility, since he seemed determined to block the Reformation in as far as he found possible.

Stephen Gardiner, who had at one time been Wolsey's private secretary, had enjoyed a varied, if largely successful career in the service of Henry VIII. In 1528, he was sent together with Edward Fox as an ambassador, in a bid to persuade both the French court and the Pope that Henry's proposed divorce was in accordance with the laws of God and man. His successful mission marked the starting point of his involvement in the divorce, a struggle which was to last for the next five years.

By 1535 Gardiner had renounced all allegiance to the Papal See, and shortly after published an attack on papal claims to ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and the authority of human tradition. In its place he asserted the King's right to supremacy in matters both spiritual and temporal. Despite the sentiments which he expressed in this work, 'De Vera Obedientia', and his contribution to the translation of the Bible, instigated by Cromwell in 1533, Gardiner seems to have remained uncomfortable with the continuing progression of reform. His resultant hostility to the reforming

doctrines was largely instrumental in his advice to Henry not to join the Protestant league in 1536, and in the shaping of the Six Articles of 1539.

By now Gardiner's hostility towards the reforming ideas was self-evident. In addition to influencing royal policy away from the furtherance of reforming ideas, Gardiner also took an active part in a number of heretical trials, amongst them those of Frith and Lambert. Despite a few difficult times, Gardiner's power continued un-abated up until the death of Henry VIII. To the reformers, he became their worst and most powerful enemy, turning the King away from any further reforms, and thus severely hindering the movement. Foxe illustrates the extent of Gardiner's influence over the King by referring to an event which took place in 1546 whilst Gardiner was out of the country. According to Foxe, the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury planned to carry out certain reforms in Gardiner's absence: "amongst other things the King determined to pull down the roods in every church, and to suppress the accustomed ringing on All Hallow-night, with a few such like vain ceremonies."[1] The Archbishop was further instructed to draw up the necessary documents for the King to sign. However, in the time that

1 Foxe - 'op cit' Vol V p 562

elapsed Henry changed his mind on the grounds that he had:

> "received leters from my Lord of Winchester, now being on the other side of the sea, about the conclusion of a league between us, the emperor, and the French King, and he writeth playnly to us, that the league will not prosper nor go forward, if we make any other innovation,change, or alteration either in religion or ceremonies, than heretofore have already been commenced and done."1

Incidents such as this, and Gardiner's continued opposition to any real reforms, convinced Turner that the bishop of Winchester was foremost in a conspiracy to prevent change, in preparation for the eventual restoration of Papal authority in the realm. There could be no more sure sign of this than his refusal to allow the free circulation of the scriptures in English or the abolition of certain abuses within the church.

> "The bishop of Romis canon law with hys develyshe ceremonies entered into the churche of England and brought no small advantage unto the pope the master to thys doctrine ad to his childer of the

1 J Foxe - 'op cit' Vol V pg 562

same law and traditiones ... Know that your father the pope in hys ceremonies and canon law aloweth with hys voice Christs doctrine, yit seyng that I know that he doth that for that intent that he may tarry still in the chirche and be undryven out to flatter preachers with all and to purches credence unto his fals doctrine. I think that for all hys namyng of Jesus and flatteryng of the Apostelles, that his hole hepe of traditions is to be casten out."[1]

Additional signs of papal survival were seen within the refusal to allow communion in both kinds, the worship of the cross and images, the refusal to permit priests to marry, and the continued emphasis on symbolism in church services. Turner held that Gardiner was responsible for the survival of all such abuses, because he actively attempted to curtail the reform movement. He equally believed that if Henry was left free from Gardiner's advice, he would initiate a much more thorough going reform. This implies that Henry was not directly involved in the reforming procedure, but rather that he was content to devolve responsibility in this area to men like Cromwell and Gardiner, taking very little interest in religious policies.

1 William Turner - Rescuynge - Bv^r

If this was indeed the case, it would explain why the reforming movement failed to gain momentum during Henry's reign, and achieved little of significance, beyond the abolition of the papal headship, and the dissolution of the monasteries. It would also help to explain, the introduction of regressive policies which withdrew the rights of the people to have access to the vernacular scriptures, and the right of priests to marry, as the work of a conservative clergy reluctant to allow extensive change.

However, conversely, Cromwell and the reforming factions at court would have been equally quick to utilise the opportunities afforded by the King's disinterest. Additionally, Henry had on previous occasions exhibited a strong interest in the religious affairs of his country. First, as a member of the Catholic Church, in which capacity he earned the title 'defender of the faith', and secondly as a man who had both read, and to some extent empathised with the ideas of Fish and Tyndale. Indeed in case of the former, sufficiently to offer him a promise of safe conduct.

In his own dealings with the clergy, Henry had displayed strong tendencies of favouring a policy of Erastianism, engaging in the lengthy process of limiting clerical powers through the statutes of Praemunire. It, therefore, seems unlikely that he

would have entrusted such power into the hands of Stephen Gardiner, who in 1532 had incurred the King's displeasure, for strongly defending the privileges of his order, and its right to legislate for the good of men's souls.

Additionally, Henry distrusted Gardiner, who had a reputation for dealing with both sides in the dispute, for example: After the publication of '<u>De Vera Obedienta</u>', he allowed a report to circulate amongst romanists, that the work had been written under threat of death. Despite his failure to remove Gardiner from power during his reign Henry was sufficiently aware that Gardiner was potentially dangerous to a monarchy which might be too weak to control him. For this reason, Henry was determined to ensure that his will precluded any possibility that Gardiner would become a member of the regency council.

It is, therefore, unlikely that Gardiner alone was responsible for hindering the progress of the Reformation. Henry himself was also nervous of instigating radical changes which might result in discontent. He could easily have removed Gardiner from power and replaced him with someone more favourable to the reforming movement had he so desired. However, Gardiner fulfilled a very important role in limiting the extent of the clerical reform.

Turner and his fellow reformers, ever hopeful that the King might be spurred into instigating a more radical reform, chose to blame his advisers when they found this was not to be. They continued to petition the King in the hope of gaining his support, right up to the time of his death in January 1547. Stephen Gardiner became the subject of Turner's attacks because he appeared to be responsible for impeding the progress of the Reformation.

In a similar way George Joye, writing under the pseudonym of James Sawtry issued a work in 1541, defending the marriage of priests. Again Stephen Gardiner was the subject of attack and the work itself written in response to recent contemporary events.

In the time preceding the Six Articles of 1539 many English clergy had decided to follow their continental counterparts in abandoning their vows of chastity and taking wives in the belief that God had instituted marriage as a remedy for those "burning in concupiscence and desyer of the other sexe."[1] The Six Articles reasserted the doctrine of clerical celibacy,

1 James Sawtry [George Joye] The Defence of the marriage of priests - J. Troost Auryk (really widow C. Ruremundensis Antwerp) 1541

and special attention was given to dissolving the marriages of those priests, who had already entered into wedlock, in the expectation of further reforms. In actual fact Henry had long been strongly opposed to the idea of clerical marriage, so much so that the matter became one of the major issues which prevented an agreement with the Lutherans. Sawtry's work was addressed to these recent events, and issues a strongly worded condemnation of those responsible for separating priests from their wives.

The issue of clerical marriage was one of some importance, as it was seen as the proper remedy to one of the great clerical abuses. The clergy were frequently attacked for their immorality, marriage was held to be instituted by God as a means of preventing such immorality. Additionally clerical celibacy was seen as a clear sign of the continuing presence of papal influence, within the English church.

> "Our antichrist papists, the very seal of ye serpent, wyser than God, for that yet at the temptacion of ye serpent their father, they dayly eate of the tree of knowledge of good and evill, seeing man alone, affirme and decree agenst God. that it is better for a man to lyve alone, yea to have whores (as one sayd bisshop Stokesly of

London in open iugement to a maryed prest) then to be maryed to his owne wyfe."[1]

The Six Articles, with their prohibition of clerical marriage remained in force, for the remainder of Henry's reign. In 1548, Edwards regency council abolished clerical celibacy, and although clerical reactions to this measure varied greatly from place to place, hundreds of priests did decide to marry, giving credence to Sawtry's claims that the vow of clerical celibacy had been exacted by force, and was therefore, invalid as a vow.

If clerical celibacy was an issue of some import, surprisingly the debate over purgatory received very little attention in the reformers works, the majority preferring to concentrate on the question of ecclesiastical authority and the nature of clerical reform. Three notable exceptions are to be found in Simon Fish's Supplication to the Beggars, Robert Barnes', Supplication to Henry VIII, and the two works of John Frith, a Disputation of Purgatory, and Articles for which he died. All these are relatively early works and can be dated at 1529, 1531, 1531, and 1533 respectively. Apart from these works the doctrine of

1 'ibid' Aiii^{v}

purgatory receives only a scant mention in a handful of other works, for example: Turners '<u>Romish Fox</u>' and Stalybridge's '<u>Epistle Exhoratory</u>'

This silence perhaps attests to the reluctance of the reformers to deal with such a controversial issue, or perhaps more likely to the fact that the debate over purgatory became of less importance as reforming ideas progressed, and it was rapidly subsumed into the greater issue of ecclesiastical authority and the total reform of the sacramental system. Additionally the dispute over the sale of pardons in England, never became the vexed issue that it had been in Luther's Germany, and only Frith mentions the issue in the Lutheran context of selling pardons for the souls of the dead. Barnes on the other hand chose to see it as yet another expression of clerical avarice.

> "You make also mo lawes and mo statutes, and dyspence with them for money, and all these thynges doo you be the autorite of the keyes that open heaven and helle and a mans coffer and also hys pursse, ye and sumtyme they losse the cotte from his backe."[1]

1 Robert Barnes - 'op cit' Kvii^{r}

The works of all three reformers echo the ideas of Luther's ninety-five theses, in particular those which deal with the popular objections to indulgences and their relationship to purgatory. For example Luther expresses his discontent with the doctrine of purgatory in theses eighty-two and eighty-eight on the grounds that if the Pope had the power to empty purgatory he should do so on the grounds of love, and not solely for money, a sentiment which is faithfully echoed by John Frith when he writes:

> "If he can do it then let him delyver every man that is on the pointe of deeth bothe from the cryme and from the payne, and so shall never man more neyther entre into hel nor yet into purgatory which were, the best dede and moste charitablest that ever he dyd yee and this oughte he to do (yf he coulde) althoughe it shulde cost him his owne lyfe and soule ther to."[1]

Frith also mirrors the ideas of Luther in that one of his major fears over the sale of indulgences and purgatory, consisted of indignation over the fact that the ordinary people were hindered in obtaining salvation by the very means designed to help them in

1 John Frith '<u>Disputation</u>' Lvii^{r}

this purpose. For Frith purgatory was an evil because it made men self-confident and disregardful of the need for contrition before God.

In contrast with this, Simon Fish condemned the doctrine of purgatory not purely on spiritual grounds, but partially as part of a conspiracy by the church "to translate all kingdomes from other princes unto them". He felt it was his duty to warn Henry against this plot. For the good of the realm, he exposed the doctrine of purgatory as part of a dangerous plot against the state.

> "I wrote this pugatory and the Popes pardon is all the cause of the translacion of year kingdome so fast into their hondes wherfore it is manifest it cannot be of Christ, for he gave more to the temporall kingdome, he himsilfe paid tribute to Cesar, he toke nothing from hym but taught that the higher powers should alweys be obeid."[1]

The debate over purgatory, called into question the claims of the Pope to control the spiritual destiny of man, for if the church was empowered to gain forgiveness for mens sins, then it could rightfully

1 Simon Fish - Supplication' 'op cit' Div^{V}

claim the fear and respect of all men. By calling into disrepute the papal claims to hold the keys to the Kingdom the reformers belittled clerical claims to possess spiritual authority, and also hit at the financial aspects of purgatory and indulgences. Their denial of papal authority in this matter in favour of the saving power of the gospel, removed the need for the people to pay due deference to either the priest or any other member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

In the final analysis purgatory was to be rejected as an invention of the church because it failed to meet the Protestant test of authenticity, namely: that it did not comply with the tenets of the doctrine of justification, and that "there is not one word spoken of it in al holy scripture", and that therefore it was not a necessary or beneficial part of the Christian faith.

Protestant anti-clericalism took many different forms, from the reprinting or imaging of Lollard polemic, to the inclusion of theological objections to clerical practices. In all cases it emanated from a long held discontent, with the contemporary state of the church. Of all the Protestant literature, it was the appeal of such works, which were initially to win the greatest support for the Protestant cause.

III SAINTS AND IMAGES

> "Considering therefore, that almost in no place of this realm is any sure quietness, but where all images be clean taken away and pulled down already, to the intent that all contention in every part of the realm, for this matter may be clearly taken away, and that the lively image of Christ should not contend with the dead images ... you shall not only give order, tht all the images remaining in any church or chapel within your diocese be removed and taken away, but also by your letters signify unto the rest of the bishops within your province his highnesses pleasure, for the like order to be given by them, and every of them within their several dioceses."[1]

The early English reformers opposed the use of images from the outset, and whilst the church sought to defend the images as books of the poor, men like George Joye

1 Letter from the Council of Edward VI to the Archbishop of Canterbury for the abolition of images - 21st Feb. 1547/1548

and Robert Barnes[1] condemned them as objects of deceit and tyranny. However, despite these early protests the reformers were to receive a poor response to their pleas during the reign of Henry VIII, who whilst confiscating the wealth of the church, did little to remedy even the worst abuses associated with the various image centred cults. It was not until the reign of his son Edward that the church leaders were finally instructed to engage in the removal of images from churches within their jurisdiction.

Despite the increasing attention given to the imagery question by the English writers during the latter half of the 1540's[2], the letter issued to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1547 probably owes more to changing circumstances in England, than to a sudden willingness to implement the ideas of those in exile. The death of Henry VIII, and the ascension of Edward, had brought with it the ascendancy of a council which desired the implementation of more radical reforming policies. Additionally there had been recent outbreaks of iconoclastic activity amongst the populace, a factor

1 George Joye - Letters of John Ashwell 'op cit'
Robert Barnes - Supplication 1531 'op cit'

2 Henry Stalybridge - Epistle Exhoratorye, Henry Brinkelow - Lamentation, John Hooper - Declaration and Ten Commandments

which the council wished to eliminate by the controlled removal of images.

Whatever its origins the exiled reformers would have welcomed a move which they believed was an essential step in the true reformation of the church, purifying it from the taint of idolatry. To them the mere presence of images within the church was a sign of the continuing influence of Catholicism and in a more singular vein the failure of those in office to rid the church of the influence of the Antichrist.

> "Who is he that doth not here somewhat smell and preyve the salse wyly craftes of oure olde enemye ... that putyng away the true honour of god men shuld reverye and embrace this honour, which maketh the to go the cleane contrary way from god disceyung all maner men with the vayne apparance and outward sight of ymages, as though (god wrote) men by then were put in rembrance of godly things, whan in very dede by the nothinge else hath ben brought in, but an innumerable hepe of all evyls."[1]

1 Preachers of the Argenteyne - <u>A treaty declaryng and shewig dyvers causes that pyctures and other ymages ar in nowise to be suffered in churches</u> 1535 p Bii^{V}

In the 1520's Strasbourg had became an important centre for the dissemination of Protestant literature. Many books were first translated into Latin and then printed for use abroad. The work of the 'Preachers of the Argenteyne' is one such example.[1] Probably originally written in the 1520's at a time of iconoclastic activity in Strasbourg, it appears to be an early work written by the reformers, three years after the Magistrates abolished the mass in 1525, directed towards "The lokyng for certayne cousels and assemble of whiche it was hoped that some what should be decreed cocerning the generall reformation of ys churche."[2]

The text is thus written in a fashion which points towards the struggle to win the support of the Magistrates at the outset of the reforming period. Taking their lead from the Swiss reformers and in accordance with their belief that the ruler had a responsibility to reform the church the writers placed the initiative for reform firmly in the hands of the temporal authorities. This call for an ordered pattern of reform made the tract eminently suitable for use in the English context at a

1 "Which fyrst was made in oure maternall tongue, and then by oure moste welbeloved brother James Bedrote was translated into Laten and now at last into Eglysshe" 'ibid' Bii v

2 'ibid' Aii r

time when the reformers were seeking to win governmental support for their cause.

The initial importance of the text is well attested to by the fact that it was thought worthy for translation and distribution outside Strasbourg itself. By issuing the tract in English the exiled reformers ran the risk of evoking uncontrolled iconoclastic fervour amongst the ordinary people. This fear was counteracted by the tracts outright denunciation of those who took things into their own hands. This fiery condemnation of images and the need for their removal, also called for moderate action, according the temporal authorities alone the power to order the removal of images. This attempt to allay fears that the Reformation was linked hand in hand with social revolution was as applicable to the English situation as it was to Strasbourg, as in both the temporal powers feared a challenge to their authority.

Additionally the sentiments expressed by the anonymous Preachers of the Argentyne were equally shared by England's early reformers and their Lollard predecessors. On this issue at least they spoke in unison, by condemning the use of images in any form. The subject was not thought to merit the support of sophisticated philosophical arguments, as the issue was

not one of theological subtlety, rather it is a clear cut question of right and wrong.

In fact not only was image worship unacceptable because it was not practiced by the early church, but also upon the grounds that it was thought worthy of condemnation in both the Old and the New Testaments. Additionally its prohibition was part of the core of God's covenantal agreement with his chosen people, both in the original covenant, and the new covenant inaugurated by Christ. This is clearly visible in the work of John Hooper, who wrote of the second commandment.

> "Seeing there is no commundment, in any of the boothe testametes to have ymagis, but as ye se the contrarye ad likewice the univesall, Catholike,and holie church, never usid ymagis, or the wrytinges of the apostelles and prophets."[1]

Hooper was supported in this by both Solme and Brinkelow, who saw the use of images as clearly contravening God's laws. Additionally images changed both man's perception of the nature of God and damaged the relationship between the creator and creation. Both Solme and Hooper were eager to safeguard the

1 John Hooper - Ten Commandments 'op cit' Fviii^{V}

sovereignty of God against the claims that the church made for the images. They held that as soon as men sought to represent God in the shape of an image, they immediately placed limitations upon the sovereignty of God. Images were seen as detracting from the full extent of God's glory by emphasising only one aspect of the divine nature.

> "Whan he cannot be comprehendyd by no men of mens capacyte or wytt, in as much he is incorporall, invysyble, so spirtytuall that he canne be excludyde from no place, lett not us sloumvere that we can comrehende by owre one wyttis and ymagincios. Nor lett not us worshop an ydol as it were the similytyude of God whych is a spyryte, and wylbe worsyhyppyd in spryte and truth."[1]

The established church claimed that the images were the books of the poor, and as such that they were able to evoke strong feelings of devotion in the hearts of the ordinary people. Further book pictures and statues of the saints were used as aids to prayer and contemplation, in the belief that the example of a saint could inspire the faithful to a true imitation of that saint's life. Thus statues and images became the

1 Thomas Solme - 'op cit' Aviii^{V}

props of popular Christianity. However, if the ordinary people could so easily misunderstand the significance of images intended to focus their minds upon God, then how much more likely were they to misunderstand the purpose of other images. Hence images whilst encouraging the mind to focus on God could also take on a less desirable face, drawing the people yet further from understanding the true nature of God. Additionally, through the use of images the church was seen as taking upon itself the power to reveal to the faithful that which God himself had hidden. Such presumption was regarded by 'the Preachers' as a clear sign of the presence of the Anti-Christ within the church.

> "And as for that which some men do sayne that images are the bokes of laymen .. it is not only a weke reason, but also a folish as who shuld saye that God, of all most wysest and which is very wysdom itselfe, either dyd not knowe these bokes, ozels through malyce dyd withholde from his own people such maner bokes and monumentes, whereby they might be put in rememberance of godlly thinges."[1]

1 Preachers of the Argentyne 'op cit' Biv[V]

The reformers were in no doubt that the images were the work of the Antichrist who sought to deceive the people through visible images and outward manifestations of faith. Henry Brinkelow believed that by disregarding the laws of God the established church had destroyed the purity of the religion. He recognised that once statues were placed before the people it was only a matter of time before the people began to worship both the statues and the saints they represented, either alongside God, or to his complete exclusion altogether. In this way the purity of the Christian religion was tainted by a reliance upon false gods. Thomas Solme similarly warned his readers against the dangers of idols.

> "Meny nowe a dayes wyl soffere more wyllynge on God to be takyne away then theyr ydolls and poppetis hauynge besydis thys meny othere grosse a fors wythowt nunbere, by which god grettly is dysplesyd, but shuld be grettly pleysde if they purifyde themselves from ydols and suche ylls."[1]

Images which were intended to represent God were singled out as subjects worthy of particular attention. The veneration of the cross being seen as particularly

1 Thomas Solme - 'op cit' Bii^{r}

abhorrent as it detracted from the one event most central to the Christian doctrine. Additionally, the survival of this practice within the church, was seen as clear evidence that the Pope had been banished in name alone. This belief is clealy evident in William Turners Huntyng of the Romish Fox

> "Ye holde still the crepynge of the crosse, the worshyppynge of the ymage of Christ, called the Crucifix, and the worshyppyng of ymages is Pope Gregoryes doctryne - Theyr was a consell in Rome. the first yere of Gregory the thyrd wherein the worshippyng of sayntes ymages was allowed, and the gayn sayers were excomuicate and cast out of the churche."[1]

Turner held that the clergy knowingly deceived the people, since on Good Friday they led the procession to the cross with the words "Crucem tua adoramus domine - Lord we worshype thy crosse."[2]. Hence they made an object the subject of their worship, imbuing it with non-existent benefits whilst ignoring its true significance. Turner saw this as a blatant disregard of God's commandment. The priests had made no attempt

1 William Turner - Romish Fox 'op cit' Aviir

2 'ibid' Eviir

to disguise this act of worship even to the point of including the ceremony in their prayer books. In this way he held that the clergy had forfeited their position as fit leaders of Christ's people. They were no longer servants of God, but true servants of the Antichrist, who deceived the people both by their teaching and example.

The continuing survival of this obvious abuse was simply seen as symptomatic of a wider reluctance to reform. Turner's whole work pointed to an ecclesiastical hierarchy that had adapted sufficiently to retain their positions, whilst restricting the progress of reform to such an extent that very few reforming ideas had actually come to practical fruition within the newly formed English church. This was seen as the visible sign of Stephen Gardiner's deliberate conspiracy to preserve the traditional practices of the church in preparation for its reassimilation into the Roman Church.

Turner failed to take into account the lack of any evident support for the removal of images amongst the common people. The images may well have derived from the Antichrist, but for the ordinary people they represented the most potent and realistic focus of popular devotion, and there was no widespread desire to see them removed. The saints and their images played

an important part in the lives of the ordinary faithful. Attributed with the power to do miracles and intercede on the supplicant's behalf the saints were an essential and popular part of sixteenth century English religion. Eventually when moves where made to ensure the removal of images from the church many of the priests and their congregations went to great lengths to preserve the images in case the religious climate should change once again, restoring the saints to their former position in the celestial hierarchy.

Spiritually the images were held wholly responsible for depriving God of the honour which was his due. In this way the images had the opposite effect from that which was originally intended. The established church claimed that it had deliberately perpetuated the practice of setting up images, in order to present the ordinary people with the means via which they might learn more about God, and consequently deepen their faith. Unfortunately, as far as the reformers were concerned this is where the church had erred. Images did not serve to remind the people of the grace of God, but instead had resulted in diverting the people's attention away from God and towards the supposed merits of the saints. So complete was this process that they no longer attributed to God the honour which was rightly his, and also belittled the sacrifice of Christ, by making their own sacrifices to the images,

in order that they would intercede with God on their behalf.

> "Some slypper thought and transytory remebounce of god doth come sodenly into our mynde, yet ye some thought is sooner banysshed away, than that it can gader sufficient roles in the brestes or mynd of men for as it is but a thyng of mans devysynge, and receyved without the comaundement of god. Even so was it never able to move or stere our hertes and myndes with the quicke and lyvely pieyvyng, either of ye workes or of ye benefytes of God."[1]

By their disregard of the scriptures the clergy were held responsible for the lack of spiritual understanding amongst the people. Hooper called upon all people to give due honour to God. These he specified as faith, love, fear and prayer, and claimed that when any of these were attributed to any but God, then the people were guilty of idolatry and flaunting their false gods openly before the creator.

As far as the reformers were concerned such negligence on the part of the church was unforgivable. All of the Protestant reformers placed great emphasis on the need

1 Preachers of the Argentyne 'op cit' Aviii^{v}

for a well instructed laity. Hence the importance that Luther allocated to the preaching of the scriptures, and the requirement that the people should receive instruction before approaching the Lord's table. The clergy were held to have a responsibility to make men aware of God's mercy, and this they could only do by preaching God's word as it was contained in the scriptures.

The reformers believed that it was only when a doctrine conformed to God's word that it could be held to be true. All other doctrines were seen as the invention of mankind and as such unable to contribute to a man's salvation. Additionally, at the other extreme such a doctrine might even prove a severe hindrance to the development of true faith. Images, Hooper held, fell into this category.

> "For him that is nether hot nor cold, but indifferent to use the knolege of godes word and christes church, withe the word and glosse of man that teacheth the use of ymages in the churche doothe not well, they have byn thoccacion of great hurt and Idolatrye, the churche of the Old testament nor the New never taught the people with ymagys."[1]

1 John Hooper - Declaration 'op cit' Cvi^{v}

The preaching of God's word far surpassed all other considerations. By comparison the ceremonies of the church were of little significance, save where they were detrimental to the propagation of man's salvation. The church was held to have a much higher duty than the observance of ceremonies. Its main responsibility lay in making the people aware of God's saving grace. This in turn could only be accomplished by the scripture, an understanding of which was pre-requisite to salvation.

> "But ymages are so farre from helpyng unto thys thynge, that the same do dyverse ways hyndre and let every man from the trewe honourynge of God. For who is he [I beseche you] whom ymages set up in churches or in other more narrowe places, have not rather made neglygent about trewe honouring of God, than holpen hym any wyt to honoure god trewly."[1]

The church was held to have failed in this task, the people had received insufficient instruction in God's word, and were further disadvantaged by the dangers of image worship. Solme and Hooper held that such negligence on the part of the clergy was unforgiveable.

1 Preachers of the Argentyne 'op cit' Aviii^{r}

The church itself, however, saw its actions as anything but irresponsible. After all its clergy had deliberately encouraged the establishment of images, that they might aid, and not hinder the faith of the common people. In an age when learning was the preserve of the clergy and the rich, they had sought to reinforce religious teaching through pictures and symbolism. This they believed made the salient points of the faith accessible to the ordinary people, in a language which they could understand. Thus when they spoke of images they spoke of the books of the poor.

Solme, however, held that the images had the opposite effect from that originally intended. In the eyes of the poor the images no more represented Christian qualities than the symbols reminded them of Christ's teaching. The saints were worshipped through their statues and the symbols were venerated for their own sake,and not for that which they were intended to represent.

> "As towchynge theyre opynion ymagis to be the bokis of ydols it is not the way and reson to teche the pepell of God, whom God wyll to be instructe by anothere techynge and by another boke, then by the bockis and stackis and folysh lyes and fauyllis, he hath showde the prechynge of hys worde to be a comyn doctryn to all men, to

be a bocke whych shall teche us only the way of truthe. Therfore to what end do it perteyn to sett up so meny crossis of wode, ston, if that thynge be oft tymes betynne in owre aeis, Christ to be betrayed for owre syns, of which on worde they may lerne more then of a thowsande crossis of gold and sylver, which shall make a couyttus mend more to remember mammon than Christ."[1]

Hence images set up to remind the people of God's teaching became the subjects of misunderstanding, the focus of superstition and misplaced belief, no matter to what extent the clergy disclaimed responsibility, for the present state of image worship, no matter how insistently they asserted that they had never advocated the adoration of statues, saints or symbols. The reformers were insistent that the blame for the present state of affairs fell upon the clergy, either directly or indirectly, through their example of and failure to correct even the most blatant abuses of image worship.

Furthermore, the clergy perpetuated the practice of image worship by condemning all who denied its validity as heretics. They themselves attempted to disguise their acts of idolatry by clothing "their worship with

1 Thomas Solme 'op cit' Biii^{r}

dulie and hyperdulia." In this way Joye claimed they sought to "excuse thys fallying downe before ymages, kisssing of theyr fete, kneling, praying, holding up of handes, steking up of candels and gevynge them gyftes, and callynge for theyre helpe in siknes and perel."[1]

Solme even went as far as to cite the clergy as the true heretics, since it was they who deprived God of his honour, and not those who refused to bow down to the carvings of stone and wood. By word and example the clergy had perpetuated their heresy, leading the people into the same errors.

> "I cannot se what fruttis they brynge to ydols and onlernyed persons chefly when God is carvyd to them, but to make them heritykes in belyvynge to have God present all hole by members as they carve and paynte hym. And such imagis a present sauntis, what er they but examples of grett suberflugte, costoloste,and a tityll of an yll name."[2]

From a more practical angle the images were also seen

1 George Joye - Letters of John Ashwell 'op cit' Cvii^{r}

2 Thomas Solme 'op cit' Bii^{v}

as partially to blame for the declining moral standards of the common people. The images were abused by many as a licence to commit sin in the certainty of forgiveness. In this sense they had created in the minds of the people a false sense of security, based on the ability of the saints to intervene on their behalf, thus saving them from the consequences of God's wrath.

Additionally the reformers were well aware of the inevitability that images once placed in churches would eventually become objects of worship. For the uneducated laity, who were first taught to focus their minds upon the merits of a saintly life, the step from contemplation to worship was one of natural progression. To them it was only natural to pray principally to the image, and only secondly to God. In an age when God was feared the ordinary people turned from an angry God towards the more forgiving saints, whom it was believed would intervene on their behalf, softening God's anger and prompting his forgiveness.

Some, such as Barnes, believed that the church deliberately perpetuated this misunderstanding, doing nothing to correct it. In an anti-clerical vein he acccused the clergy of caring nothing for the spiritual welfare of the people, particularly when such a concern might have an adverse effect on their material gains.

"... because you be hypocrites and unsacyable belly godes you care not [soo you may disseve the sympille people and lede them with blinde shadows thereby to fylle your offerynge boxis ad chestes to mayntayne youre unsociable carnall eppytytes] how yt honoure of god be savyd or howe your pore brothers consciens be disseved, think you that thys ys ynough to say that no man ys so mad nor folyshe as to honour ye stokes and stonys."[1]

Few were prepared to accept that the clergy really believed that the laity or the lowly priest, truly understood the official doctrine of the church. The only reasonable explanation for this misunderstanding lay in the failure of the church to make its central doctrines accessible to the minds of the laity. Saints the church taught interceded between God and man. But the fine distinction between an intercessor who provided succour for those who begged for help and a God who was to be worshipped was lost on the common man. As saints were assigned their respective roles and individual cults developed, it was almost inevitable that statues and shrines would become objects of reverence and worship.

1 Robert Barnes 'op cit' Rvii^{V}

Despite claims to the contrary, in the face of such inevitability, no amount of teaching, could prevent the people assigning to images that position which truly belonged to God. Thus in worshipping the images that the church set before them, the people deprived God of that which truly belonged to him. Hence the protestation of Brinkelow, who exhorted the people with the words:

> "Oh wicked people do ye not se that both the apostles and angelles refused to be worshipped of men but wolde have all the glorie geven to God .. whether they do not likewyse nowe seke all the glorie to God and not to themselves. Judge thou gentle reader. And thinke ye not that if the blessed virgine Marie were now upon earth and saw her sonne and onely redemmer thus robbed of his glorie [which glorie ye blinde citizens geve unto hyr] wolde she not teare her clothes, like as ded the Apostles."[1]

In this sense images were seen as depriving God of that glory which is rightfully his. In a monotheistic religion it was held that all praise and worship must of necessity be directed to God alone. Doubtless the

1 Henry Brinkelow 'op cit' Avi[v]

preachers of the Argentyne had Exodus 20 in mind when they wrote:

> "For sybstancyall and parfeyt fayth, and the parfeyt honouryng of god, requireth that we shulde do our dilygence to cause this only god to be knowen in all places, that we shulde drede and honour him: That we shulde in all places and at all times with full mouthe, and prayse magnify the workes of him alone."[1]

That God should be expected to share the honour which was due to him for his saving act in Christ was totally unacceptable to members of the reformed position, with their strong emphasis on justification by faith alone. The early Protestants were unable to concede that God and the saints might work together for man's salvation. On this issue there could be no compromise. The preachers of the Argentyne were representative of the reformers in general when they called for the removal of all images lest they should lead astray even one of the weaker brethren. However, unlike the others they alone were prepared to compromise on the issue allowing all who so wished to retain their images in the privacy of their homes. They were however adamant

1 Preachers of the Argentyne 'op cit' Avii^{V}

that the images must be removed from the churches.

> "Eve lykewyse [1 cor 8] do we judge that it is to be thought of images [whyche likewise, as per adventure some man maye have at home within his owne house, so tht it maybe done without offendyng his neyghboure] even so the use of theym in churches [or in other place] where eyther they may be worshypped or offende and hurte their neybour is in nowyse longer to be suffered."[1]

Given that they formed such a threat to man's salvation, why then were they allowed to remain within the English church until as late as 1547? Undoubtedly popular opinion had much to do with their retention. During the reign of Henry VIII there was a desire to avoid parish reform, which may have proved contentious amongst the common people. Although the dissolution of the monasteries effected the poor amongst them it did not provoke civil disorder in the way which the removal of images and the destruction of shrines may have done.

Undoubtedly the clergy were also opposed to the removal of the images, possibly because they sincerely believed that they were suitable books of the poor, or because

1 'ibid' Cvi^{r}

as the more sceptical reformers held they were unwilling to surrender the substantial financial gains to be made in this area. Whatever the clergy's motivation in preserving the place of images in the church the financial aspect cannot be overlooked. Images were compared with each other, their beauty and graciousness debated and various miracles attributed to them. All these served to draw people to the respective churches and to persuade the faithful to part with their gold in hope of a better life to come.

According to Solme the clergy had craftily attempted to disguise their idolatry by bedazzling the people by the gold, silver and treasures with which they had bedecked the idols. He held that these along with the emphasis on good works had combined together to totally deceive the unlearned amongst them.

> "Which sect is also is signified by the pecokes, whos pride is in theyre workis and opercions and exiled themselves as the spectacle or onperlesse flowere of this worlde, which pekokes more reyoce in theyre taylle, that is in theyr workis and blinde folowers, thene in theyr hed an savyoure Christ Jesue."[1]

1 Thomas Solme 'op cit' Bvi[V]

Additionally the practice of image worship had drawn people away from the fulfillment of their true Christian duties, both to their immediate families and to the wider community. "Are not these men to be laughed at" says the Letters of John Ashwell[1] "that may and ought to worshipe god at home in theyr chamber and yet will forsake wyfe, chyldren and household [whose presens they behove] and spend both bodye and goddes in longe and wearye travelyngs, to fall downe and worhsip a stocke or a stone made with mannes hande."

The images were condemned on the grounds that they were directly responsible for diminishing man's sense of accountability before God. In practical terms this amounted to a widespread decline in behavioural standards, and the observance of the Christian Life.

A lament over the loss of good works seems an unusual stance for those within the reformed tradition. After all the one belief central to all reforming works was that of justification by faith alone, a belief that of necessity rejected the efficacy of good works to salvation. However, this teaching must be set in its

1 George Joye Letters of John Ashwell 'op cit' Cvi[v]

proper context. All were agreed that image worship exercised a detrimental effect upon mankind's quest for salvation both in a spiritual and practical sense. All were also agreed that good works could not contribute to God's initial act of saving grace. However, once a man had been justified good works also had an important part to play in the ensuing process of sanctification. These good works did not hasten or ensure the act of forgiveness, but rather resulted from it.

In their attack upon the images the reformers had a genuine grievance when they stated that images distracted people from doing good works, or fulfilling the commandments of the Christian life. For by focusing their attention upon the supposed merits of the images the people misdirected their desire to do good away from their brethren, to the pacification and supplication of the saints and by default the images by whom they were represented. Thus in this way images were held to have an adverse effect on the practical as well as the spirtual dimensions of Christianity.

> "In vayne worshippe and serve they me with the invencions and Imaginciōs of men. Thus follow they their owne imagincion providinge for the deade unconmaunded and leave providing for the poore lyvinge which the scripture most ernestly teacheth and comaundeth ... the rewarde of

everlastinge life to them which to their power have provyded to do for the wydowe and fatherlesse, whiche is to be understonde of all povertie, as presour, and those that he abrode."[1]

In conclusion then the reformers objected to the practice of image worship on both spiritual and practical grounds. Images deprived God of his honour and the people of God's mercy. The people were deliberately deceived in this matter by the clergy, who by their failure to remove the images, had allowed the abuses to continue unstemmed. Images and image worship resulted in the development of cults and superstitions unacceptable to the theological stance of the early reformers.

They of course were not the first to condemn image worship. The Lollards too had rejected these books of the poor refusing to accord them any place in true Christianity. Their writings had found recognition in anti-clericalism. Surprisingly there was no real attempt to harness this potent force of popular discontent in the works of the early reformers, posssibly, because they feared that if they were seen

1 Henry Brinkelow 'op cit' A iv^{V}

to prompt uncontrolled acts of iconoclasm their whole movement might be condemned as anarchical, and thus a threat to the temporal power.

This does not of course mean that the reformers were any less insistent that the images should be removed, but simply that they chose to appeal to state intervention in the matter rather than to leave it in the hands of the ordinary people. After all there was already ample evidence to show that reforming ideas could be twisted to manipulate the ordinary people into acts of civil disobedience.

The reformers were in total agreement that the images should be removed from the sight of the people, that they might no longer be the objects of veneration. Having advised their readers of the dangers that stemmed from the use of images in worship, it seems only natural that they should desire their complete obliteration from places used for public worship. However, few of them have much to say on the specific removal of images. This is probably due to the fact that without exception the early English reformers placed the initiative for reform firmly in the hands of the King, emphasising the need for civil obedience and an ordered programme of reform within the church itself.

At least one of the reformers was to envisage yet another problem in weaning the people away from image worship, and directing them towards the true worship of God. John Hooper was realistic enough to realise that the removal of the images in itself would not be sufficient since history showed that image worship and the popularity of holy shrines was more inclined to increase in popularity than fade away.

> "An image ons brought into the churche lyvithe along tyme, graunt that at the begyning there was a godd preacher of the churche. The preacher diethe, the idole the lenger it livithe the younger it waxithe, as ye may see by the ydole of Walsinghan, Canterbury and Hayles, they florishyd moost a little before there desolation in the raygne of the kyngs maieste that ded is, Henry the VIII of A blyssd memori. At there setting up I suppose the preachers were more diligent and zealous of godes glory than afterward. But was not the original damnable, agaynst the word of god to geve the people souche a boke to lern by, that should sende them to the devell."[1]

1 John Hooper - Declaration of Christ 'op cit' Eii[r]

Hooper recognised the need not only for the removal of images but also the need for the people to be re-educated in the true practices of their religion.

The Preachers of the Argentyne, writing in a totally different context, were willing to express their opinions on the future treatment of idols within the churches. However, they too take a moderate stance over the removal of images from the churches. Although convinced of their abuse, they held back from demanding their immediate removal. The arguments against the images were directed towards the clergy and the temporal powers who had the power to gradually remove this abuse from the church.

It is appropriate that this little work for Strasbourg should have been thought worthy of consideration by the English reformers, for both communities were to undergo a well ordered and gradual reformation controlled from above. All authority to remove images was placed firmly in the hands of the temporal powers. Iconoclasm was not encouraged, any removal of statues must of necessity be carried out in an orderly and authoritative manner, not as the result of popular action, since the latter would damage the reforming cause.

"Nowe to an householder it belongeth accordynge to the example of James the patriarche, to clense and rydde his house of theym. But to caste theym out of churches and comen places it is the duetye of the heed offycer and governer, which duety [thankes be to Christe] our governour hath knowen, and hath executed with Christen gravite."[1]

In the case of temporal authorities who refuse to rid the churches of their images, the prohibition against popular action to accomplish the task still stood. In such circumstances the images would undoubtedly still remain as physical presences. However, the faithful Christian was not entirely helpless in his desire to banish images. All could endeavour to remove them from their mind even if they were still physically present in the churches.

"For in as moche as they are outwarde thynges, no man ought to take upon him more power over theym than the condition and state of every man shall require, tha is to wytte, that everyman privately banyshe them out of his owne mynde, rejectynge the folyshe estimation of them."[2]

1 Preachers of the Argentyne 'op cit' Fviii^{r}

2 Preachers of the Argentyne 'op cit' Fviii^{r}

Although the calls for the removal of images from the English churches began in the early 1530's, and proved a topic of constant debate throughout the 1540's, the reformers were to wait a long time to see their teaching translated into action. Shortly before Edwards council sent out instructions to ensure the removal of images John Hooper could still write:

> "Of late yeares the imagyes were in the temple and honoryed withe paternoster, hart and mynd. Withe legy and kne. This use of ymagis is taken away in many places, but now they be applyed to another use, salicet to teache the people, and to be lay mennes bookes. As clamakene and many other faithe. Oh blasphemous and devillishe doctirne to apoynt the moost noble creature of god, man idued with witt and reason, resembling the ymage of the everlasting God to be instructed and tawght of a mute domme blind and ded Idoll."[1]

This clearly shows that although the practice of image worship was by this time frowned upon the cause of the problem still remained. The images were now officially no more than books of the poor. Yet they still

1 John Hooper Declaration of Christ 'op cit' Dviii^{r}

detracted from the preaching of the word of God by their mere presence.

Officially the images had become no more than teaching aids for the ordinary man. They were no longer afforded their many powers but the danger of deception was still there. This danger was most commonly realised amongst the ordinary people, who despite what they were taught still adhered to the original practice of worshipping the images and calling upon them for forgiveness.

> "It is the abuse and proptianacion of the temple to suffre them, and a great occation for people to return to there accustomyd use."[1]

Therefore, even at this point in time, the image cult had continued to survive and flourish amongst those for whom it was first established. In this then lay the true problem of allowing the use of images in the church. Once established there was nothing which could discredit their powers in the minds of the ordinary people. Instead of lapsing into disuse on the contrary they continued to grow in popularity and strength. Far from being the tools by which the ordinary man came to

1 'ibid' Evi^{r}

know God the images were worthless teachers which merited no regard. So worthless were they that Hooper concluded; "the ploughman be he never so unlernyd shal be better instructyd of Christes deathe and passion by the corn that he sowithe in the fyld, and likwyce of Christes resurrection then be all the ded postes that hang in the churche or pullyd out of the sepulchere withe Christus resurgers."[1]

The continuance of the superstitious practices condemned by both the early Protestants and their predecessors, is well attested in the works of both Henry Brinkelow and William Turner, who wrote of the abuses attached to the use of holy water and the observance of holy days, the first on the grounds that it turned the creature into the creator, the second on the grounds that they were open to the abuses of image worship and social decay.

Turner wrote of the Holy Water:

> "Ye make a god of salted water which ye truste to obtayn by it salvation of both body and soul ... when as salted water is no instrument of our god

1 'ibid' Evi[r]

wherewith he worketh our salvation,and yit ye gyve salvation unto it, it foloweth that after your iudgement it is either a god itself or sum instrument of some other god whiche worketh salvacion by it."[1]

To disprove all claims that it was different from any other water he applied the same reasoning as that which was applied to the consecrated bread and wine. Holy water, for all its conjectured power eventually went stagnant and could no longer be used. This was ample proof that it had none of the special powers claimed for it by clergy and laity alike. Here too there is a point of continuity between Lollardy and the early reformers. The Lollards also denied that holy water was any more efficacious than ordinary water. Along with the denial of transubstantiation, pilgrimage and the intercession of saints, the refusal to accept that either holy water or hallowed ground had any special merits rated highly on lists of Lollard errors. Similarly in that the reformers denied the doctrine of transubstantiation it was only logical that they should also reject the beliefs which allocated special properties to holy water.

1 William Turner - Rescynge. 'op cit' $H viii^{V}$

Holy days were seen as yet another means by which the people were drawn away from true worship of God and into idolatry. The reformers were ever conscious of the social implications of the Christian religion. On the whole they required not only a church purified to the standards of the early church but also the establishment of a Christian society in which each lived according to his Christian duty. In contrast to this the celebration of holy days often resulted in the abandonment of the moral and social code which God required his people to obey.

Despite the many similarities between the Lollard condemnation of images and that of the reformers there is also one striking difference. For whereas the Lollards often emphasised the social undesirability of images the reformers were surprisingly quiet on this point. The Lollard polemic attacked the wealth accumulated as part of the image cult claiming that this wealth was wasted and would be better spent on the poor. This would be a true Christian distribution of wealth to those who needed it. The reformers remained silent on this issue. Solme made mention of the glorification of the priesthood by clothing them in valuable materials, to deceive the people in such a manner "that except a man have lyght of the sonne of righwysnes, he shall never disterne the verite from

falshed, the substauce from the ydoll."[1] There was a call for the return of the church to its rightful state as the true body of Christ but no direct demands for dispossession. The major concern of the reformers was with the erroneous doctrines of the established church. These deceived the people into error and deprived them of salvation. There was no expression of concern over poor relief probably because the reformers believed that once the church had been reformed in doctrine, the practical aspects of Chritianity would evolve of their own volition. Again their desire to show that the reforming ideas did not challenge authority probably moderated the expression of ideas which may have been misinterpreted by the ordinary people. Events amongst the German peasantry in the early years of Luther's reform had undoubtedly served to set the temporal powers on their guard against permitting the dissemination of reforming ideas which might have provoked civil unrest. For this reason the exiled reformers were possibly reluctant to speak of the redistribution of church wealth amongst the poor, in case this should prove to be the seed for popular rebellion.

Thus in a similar vein, although they undoubtedly

1 Thomas Solme 'op cit' Biv^{V}

believed, that it was essential to the spiritual well being of the people, that images were removed as quickly as possible, there is no suggestion that this task should be executed, except on the express authority of the prince. Eventually the images were to be removed from English churches on the instructions of the Kings council, but this was not until 1547/1548, almost twenty years after the exiled reformers had first attacked the use of images in churches. In comparison with other European countries that had undergone reform, the Reformation in England progressed slowly and in an orderly manner. It lacked the radicalism of the Scottish Reformation, centring on doctrinal reform and gradually bringing about change in religious observance and ecclesistical design. The precedent set by the Lollards in condemning images was followed by the early reformers in both theory and practice. For whereas Lollards had been prepared to die for their belief they were not involved in widespread iconoclastic activities. Similarly the people of sixteenth century England initially showed no inclination for image breaking, seeking rather to preserve than destroy until the time was right for the sovereign to command reform.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of English theological works, published abroad during the first twenty three years of the English Reformation, raises issues of great complexity. The picture which emerges is of a movement of great diversity, which lacked the leadership provided by the presence of the main reformers in the Continental movement. Protestant ideas from the Continent, anti-clericalism, and the old Lollard ideas, all contributed to an attack on English Roman Catholicism, and traditional religious practice.

The English books, printed abroad between 1525 and 1548, show clear evidence that their authors were greatly influenced by the ideas of the Continental Reformation. The authors of these works introduced these ideas in England, through one of two formats. Firstly, they translated works of Luther, Zwingli, and Bucer, for importation into the country, and secondly, they faithfully mirrored the ideas of their chosen reformers in their own works. Onto this basis they grafted the anti-clericalism already characteristic of the English situation in order to attract wider support. Historians who apply the revisionist strategy to the English Reformation, claim that there was no

1 The English Reformation revised - Edited by Christopher Haigh - Cambridge University Press 1987 Introduction p 8

distinctive Reformation movement as such, but only a series of events which took place over thirty years, and which in the end amounted to a Reformation. Even then they hold that this was not so much a Reformation of ideas, but more a series of legislative acts, imposing the will of those in power upon the unwilling majority[1]. Adherents of this school also deny the existence of any widespread anti-clerical feeling[2] in the pre-Reformation and Reformation era, supporting their claims by the absence of any real evidence of complaints against the clergy. Thus they deny the traditional claims that anti-clericalism played a significant role in the progression of the English Reformation.

Internal evidence from the works of exiled reformers published prior to 1549, would support the traditionalist interpretation. A vast majority of the English works printed abroad during this period gave expression to some form of anti-clericalism, whether in the form of a challenge to the laws of the church, a judgement on clerical immorality, or to bewail the lack of public preaching. It seems unlikely that reformers

1 'ibid' p 11

2 'ibid' ch 3 - Christoper Haigh - Anti-clericalism and the English reformation

such as Frith, Bale, Joye, Roy, Fish and Turner, would have been so insensitive to public feeling at home, that they should have seriously over-estimated the appeal of such works to their intended readership. Furthermore, they would surely have been reticent to issue books, of which the mere publication would be expensive and dangerous, unless they were certain of arousing adequate interest, amongst certain sections of the English population.

Thus the English reformers sought to advance their cause through a combination, of the theological and the practical, appealing to both those in power, and the ordinary people who were more concerned with practical issues, than the subtleties of theological argument. Thus the reform movement took a twofold direction.

Initially, there was a recognition of the need for reform to emanate from above. Realising that the church would not provide the necessary impetus for reform, they turned to Henry VIII instead. Appeals to the King took various forms. Works directed to him pointed out, the theological basis for reform, the abuses of clerical practices, and the political implication of secular and spiritual authority. All stressed that it was part of his princely duty to reform the church.

This emphasis upon princely sovereignty was not necessarily in keeping with the true image of reform. The type of Reformation envisaged by exiles such as Fish and Hooper, who had spent some time as students of the continental reform, was unsuitable for England, because of its size, and its political organisation. The reformers recognised the need for the co-operation of the Crown, if the reforming movement was to be in any sense successful. Those who had experience of the Strasbourg Reformation were to be disappointed when they sought to establish a similar church and state relationship at home. Henry had no intentions of sharing power, and the reformers could not have been happy to see the church so totally subjected to the state and the power of a king who had no intention of instigating any immediate doctrinal reform.

On a more positive note, attempts to gain the support of Henry by appealing to past traditions and drawing upon the already existing freedoms of the English church proved to be more successful. By portraying clerical wealth and immunity as a threat to Henry's power, whilst at the same time asserting the need for Christian obedience they drew up an antithesis between the two hoping to persuade Henry to act in their favour.

The Kings initial response to such ideas was favourable. In the early stages he openly praised the ideas of Fish's 'Supplication of the Beggars', and Tyndales 'Obedience of the common Man', when they were first presented to him. Their ideas were particularly welcomed, at a time when Henry was struggling to gain a papal annulment of his first marriage. The ensuing 1534 Act of Supremacy freed English religion to travel along the road of reform and to this extent the exiled reformers were successful.

However, the Reformation did not progress as the reformers anticipated. Henry proved intransigent to requests for a more thorough going reform, and having established his personal power, and exploited monastic wealth, he failed to turn his attention to doctrinal matters. The fortunes of the Reformation also became intricately entwined, with those of various political factions at the court.

The Ten Articles of 1536, and the Six Articles of 1539, set unacceptable limitations upon the possible extent of reform, denying the very changes in the physical appearance, and practices of the church, that the theological concepts of the Reformation demanded. The reformers, whilst welcoming Henry's initial acts, were discontented with the end result, because these acts were not the manifestations of the doctrinal reform,

which they really required. Eventually, this resulted in renewed attacks upon the clergy, and in particular Stephen Gardiner, who was accused of harbouring Roman Catholic allegiances, with the intent of re-establishing papal authority at the earliest possible date.

On a second level, reformers such as Bale, Joye, Barnes, Brinkelow, Tracey, and Turner, chose to appeal to the common people in the hope of prompting reform from below. To achieve this they exploited the already existent anti-clericalism of the ordinary people. This anti-clericalism already had a strong basis in Lollard survival. However, they failed to communicate the core of Protestant theology to a majority of the people, hence the survival of traditional beliefs and practices throughout both the reigns of Henry and Edward.

The religious sentiments of the common people to a large extent continued to be dependent upon traditional values, and whilst part of the populace, paticularly in the North, showed a reluctance to permit radical change, there is no real evidence that the Reformation lacked popular support, at least on a theoretical level.

Revisionist historian, D.M. Palliser[1], points to the lack of iconoclastic activity as clear evidence that the reform movement lacked any real popular support. However, whilst it is true to say that the people who objected to the financial demands of the clergy did not show the same enthusiasm when it came to changes in the things they believed, or the way in which they worshipped, it is perhaps inaccurate to claim that the lack of iconoclastic activity is reflective of a lack of popular support for the reforming movement.

The Reformation in England was firmly controlled by Henry's government and did not arise from the fervour of the people. Additionally, the reformers constantly sought to impress upon their followers the need for civil obedience. They made no attempt to encourage the people to take the responsibility for changing the appearance of the church into their own hands. When the Regency Council eventually ordered the removal of images from the church, the people offered no strong resistance to the process. The most they did was to hide the occasional image, in case the policy was later reversed.

1 D.M. Palliser - Popular reactions to the Reformation during the years of uncertainty 1530-1570 - in the English Reformation revised, ed Haigh, Cam. Uni. Press 1987

It is difficult to make a true assessment of the real extent to which the ordinary people accepted Protestant ideas, since with the exception of A.G. Dickens[1] study of the diocese of York, there is little evidence to indicate the extent of Protestant allegiance within the county. The issue is further complicated by the diversified nature of early English Protestant belief, which as Dickens points out "Was often fragmentary, fleeting, and elusive: it involved a climate of opinion rather than a number of specific heretics, each with an integrated theology, and under the guidance of educated leaders."[2]

However, there is some external evidence to suggest that the Reformation enjoyed a certain degree of popular support, however diverse its nature. By the sixteenth century, literacy was more widespread than is often supposed. A greater number of people were learning to read, as it became an essential part of their trade. This factor, along with the development of the printing press, was to prove of great value in the dissemination of reforming ideas. The extent of popular interest in reforming literature is witnessed

1 A.G. Dickens - Lollard and Protestants in the diocese of York 1509-1558 Ox. Uni. Press 1959

2 'op cit' P 243

by the constant efforts of the authorities to supress the foreign book trade, and to apprehend and punish heretics. If these books and their advocates, had attracted no real popular support, then the authorities would not have thought it necessary to make such concerted efforts, in eliminating them from the realm.

Furthermore when Henry first gave permission for the Bible to be issued in the vernacular in 1538, the popular interest which ensued from all sections of society was so intense that Henry felt compelled to revoke this law in 1543, limiting access to the vernacular scriptures to the households of the nobility, and members of the middle classes. Henry's act was provoked by the fear that in the hands of the ordinary people the English Bible might become a force for civil unrest.

The 1543 act dealt a severe blow to the hopes of the reformers, whose success depended upon the ability of all people to have open access to the teaching of the New Testament, through the vernacular Bible. The scriptures as the only true guide to the Christian life, were seen as the means by which the people would be brought to salvation and the realm to the status of a true Christian state. For this reason large numbers of Tyndales translation of the Bible were smuggled into

Britain, and successfully circulated, either in part or whole, amongst people of all classes.

Attempts to evaluate the extent of popular support for the Protestant cause are further complicated, by the reformers' decision to utilise the potential of surviving Lollard groups, in the dissemination of Protestant literature and ideas. Lollard ideas were also used as a basis for the introduction of Protestant thought. Already existent anti-clericalism, demands for clerical reform, and a reliance upon the vernacular New Testament were all used as a starting point by the reformers. Selected Lollard texts were also reprinted and given an appropriate introduction, these served to give Protestant thought a sense of continuity and antiquity. The style and ideas of these Lollard works, also influenced a number of the early reformers when they composed their own works. Examples of such are to be found in William Roy's 'Rede me and be not Wrothe' and Simon Fish's 'Supplication for the Beggars'.

Finally, the reformers turned to the family as a means of spreading their ideas. For this reason, they issued guides for personal and communal prayer, which would also serve as guidebooks to the Christian Life.

However, without clerical co-operation, progress was significantly slowed down. Repeated calls for an

educated preaching class fell upon deaf ears, and clerical inadequacy continued largely unchecked. The Crown continued to deny clerical marriage, despite indications that it would have been welcomed by many of the clergy themselves. Although the monasteries were dissolved, and their goods confiscated, the remainder of the church suffered very little real change.

If this lack of officialguidance resulted in diversity, it was this very diversity which ensured the survival of reforming ideas. Ideas first formulated in the reign of Henry VIII, largely survived the Marian Counter-Reformation, to resurface during the reign of Elizabeth.

The exiled authors envisaged the Reformation as much more than a matter of doctrine, or a series of practical changes within the church's liturgy and practices. They saw it rather as a way of life, which was intended to permeate the whole of society, from the highest to the lowest member, and it was in its practical rather than its doctrinal aspects that it found its greatest strength.

The genius of the early English reformers lay in their ability to take the various elements of reform and adapt them to the English situation. Lack of official guidance may have resulted in the diversification of

ideas. However, this may also have served to increase the appeal of these ideas across the whole spectrum of society. In many cases, as far as the ordinary people were concerned, Protestant ideas were subsumed into the already existing foundations of dissent. The more theological works were probably directed more towards the educated classes, courtiers, and those in positions of power.

In the 1530's Protestant works expressing continental theology, could be tolerated alongside traditional prayer guides, and polemical anti-clericalism. If the Reformation was gradual, it was also highly effective. By the time Elizabeth ascended to the throne, Protestant ideas had already taken a firm hold in the minds of the people. This was probably more the result of pre-1548 influences, than the sweeping reforms of the regency government, which were too brief to have achieved any substantial long term effect.

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